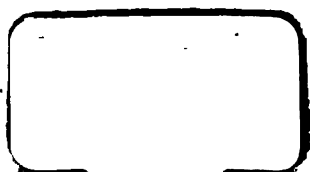




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Am. J. Maxwell,  
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April 7th. 1881.  
Pittsburgh.





LECTURES

ON THE

REVELATION.

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BY

WILLIAM J. REID,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
PITTSBURGH, PA.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following lectures were delivered on Sabbath mornings in the First United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. They were begun October 5th, 1873, and finished March 19th, 1876. Many who listened to them have repeatedly requested their publication, and in compliance with this request, they now appear in print.

They do not profess to contain anything new or startling. The author made use of all the authorities within his reach, and endeavored to express in as few and plain words as possible, the result of his studies. Among the commentaries, to which he feels especially indebted, are the following: *Horræ Apocalyptice*, by Rev. E. B. Elliott, A. M.; *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, by Rev. Albert Barnes; *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, by William Kelly; the *Apocalypse, Translated and Expounded*, by James Glasgow, D. D.; *Lectures on the Revelation of St. John*, by C. J. Vaughan, D. D.; *Apocalyptic Sketches*, by John Cumming, D. D.; *Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, by J. A. Seiss, D. D.; the *Revelation of John, with Notes*, by Rev. Henry Cowles, D. D.; *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, by Rev. C. M. Butler, D. D.

It is well known that the expositors of the Revelation differ widely in their views, but they may be arranged in three divisions. 1. *Historical or Continuous Expositors*, in whose opinion the Revelation is a progressive history of the fortunes of the church from the first century to the end of time. 2. *Præterist Expositors*, who are of the opinion that the Revelation has been almost or altogether fulfilled in the time which has passed since it was written, and that it refers principally to the triumph of Christianity over Judaism and Paganism. 3. *Futurist Expositors*, who believe that the whole book, excepting perhaps the first three chapters, refers principally, if not exclusively, to events which are yet to come. In these lectures, the historical interpretation has been adopted, not because no objections can be urged against it, but because these objections are less numerous and weighty than those which are urged against the other theories.

The author's experience in the preparation of these lectures is described in the following language of Rev. Albert Barnes, quoted from the preface to his *Notes on the Revelation*: "Up to the time of commencing the exposition of this book, I had no theory in my own mind as to its meaning. I may add, that I had a prevailing belief that it could not be explained, and that all attempts to explain it must be visionary and futile. \* \* \* I read it, as I suppose most others do, from a sense of duty, yet admiring the beauty of its imagery,

the sublimity of its descriptions and its high poetic character ; and though to me wholly unintelligible in the main, finding so many detached passages that were intelligible and practical in their nature as to make it on the whole attractive and profitable, but with no definitely formed idea as to its meaning as a whole, and with a vague general feeling that all the interpretations which had been proposed were wild, fanciful and visionary. \* \* \* I found myself soon insensibly inquiring whether, in the events which succeeded the time when the book was written, there were not historical facts of which the emblems employed would be natural and proper symbols on the supposition that it was the Divine intention in disclosing these visions to refer to them, and whether, therefore, there might not be a natural and proper application of the symbols to these events. \* \* \* In this way I examined \* \* \* the whole book ; proceeding step by step in ascertaining the meaning of each word and symbol as it occurred, but with no theoretic anticipation as to what was to follow. To my own surprise I found, chiefly in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a series of events recorded such as seemed to me to correspond to a great extent with the series of symbols found in the *Apocalypse*. \* \* \* So remarkable have these coincidences appeared to me in the course of this exposition, that it has almost seemed as if he had designed to write a commentary on some portion of this book, and I have found it difficult to doubt that that distinguished historian was raised up by an overruling Providence to make a record of those events which would ever afterwards be regarded as an impartial and unprejudiced statement of the evidences of the fulfillment of prophecy."

The author now sends this volume forth, in the hope that it may be to many members of his congregation a memorial of the pleasant years of his pastorate, and with the prayer that it may do something towards the better understanding of this portion of the inspired word.

PITTSBURGH, PA., October 1st, 1878.

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## ANALYSIS.

---

"WRITE the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." These words furnish the clue to the analysis of the Apocalypse. The apostle is commanded to write the things he had seen, the things which were, and the things which were to be thereafter. In addition to these three divisions, there are in this book, as in almost every other, a preface and a conclusion. The Apocalypse is then to be divided into five parts, viz.: a preface; an introductory vision; a description of the church as it existed in the days of John; a history of the church from the time of John till the end of the world; and a conclusion.

### I. THE PREFACE. I. 1-3.

This division contains the title and design of the book, the name of the author, and the blessedness of those who read it.

### II. THE INTRODUCTORY VISION. I. 4-20.

This division contains the vision of the glorious Redeemer, who stood in the midst of the golden candlesticks and commanded the apostle to write the things he had seen, the things which were, and the things which were to be thereafter.

### III. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH AS IT EXISTED IN THE DAYS OF JOHN. II, III.

In this division, the seven churches of Asia are regarded as the representatives of the entire church. The epistles to these churches are all fashioned on the same model: 1st. The name of the church is mentioned. 2d. Some of the attributes of the Saviour are referred to. 3d. Some of the peculiar characteristics of each church are described, and praised or rebuked as they are worthy of praise or rebuke. 4th. There follows advice or counsel or promise or warning, as the circumstances of the case demand. 5th. There is the solemn admonition, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." 6th. There is a beautiful promise to him that overcometh.

### IV. THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN TILL THE END OF TIME. IV. 1.-XXII. 5.

An introductory vision, in which the apostle is carried into heaven and shown the great throne and its surroundings. IV. 1-11. A description of the sealed book, which contained, in symbol, the future history of the church. V. 1-14.

The first seal, which was fulfilled in the prosperity of the Roman empire for about one hundred years after the time of the apostle. VI. 1, 2.

The second seal, which was fulfilled in the civil wars of the latter part of the second century. VI. 3, 4.

The third seal, which was fulfilled in the famines of the early part of the third century. VI. 5, 6.

The fourth seal, which was fulfilled in the great mortality of the latter part of the third century. VI. 7, 8.

The fifth seal, which was fulfilled in the persecutions of the beginning of the fourth century. VI. 9-11.

The sixth seal, which was fulfilled in the alarm that filled the Roman empire on account of threatened barbarian invasions, about the middle of the fourth century. VI. 12-17. A parenthetical vision of the saints in heaven, designed to comfort the persecuted church. VII. 1-17.

The seventh seal, when seven angels with seven trumpets appear. VIII. 1, 2.

The first trumpet, which was fulfilled in the invasion of the Roman empire by the Goths under Alaric, about the beginning of the fifth century. VIII. 7.

The second trumpet, which was fulfilled in the invasion of the Roman empire by the Vandals under Genseric, about the middle of the fifth century VIII. 8, 9.

The third trumpet, which was fulfilled in the invasion of the Roman empire by the Huns under Attila, a little after the middle of the fifth century. VIII. 10, 11.

The fourth trumpet, which was fulfilled in the destruction of the Western empire by the Heruli under Odoacer, about the close of the fifth century. VIII. 12.

The fifth trumpet, which was fulfilled in the rise and progress of the Moham-  
medan power, from about 622 to 772. IX. 1-11.

The sixth trumpet, which was fulfilled in the rise and progress of the Turkish power, from about 1062 to 1458. IX. 13-19. Under this trumpet are also the vision of the angel with the open book, fulfilled in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and the open Bible. X. 1-11; the vision of measuring the temple, fulfilled in the re-arrangement of the lines of separation between the true church and the false. XI. 1, 2; and the vision of the two witnesses, fulfilled in the weakness of the true church, its sore persecution, and its revival as if from death. XI. 3-18.

The seventh trumpet was then sounded, and proclamation was made that the world was coming to an end. XI. 13-18. The events which were to take place under the seventh trumpet are minutely described in a new series of visions, which is introduced by XI. 19. A representation of the true church under the symbol of a beautiful woman, its trials and its escape. XII. 1-17. A representation of the Papal power, under the symbol of two beasts; the first, a symbol of the Papal church, and the second, a symbol of the General Councils of that church. XIII. 1-18. A parenthetical vision, introduced to comfort the saints. XIV. 1-20.

Preparation for the final judgments. XV. 1-8.

The first vial, fulfilled in the French revolution of 1793. XVI. 1, 2.

The second vial, fulfilled in the naval disasters of France. XVI. 3.

The third vial, fulfilled in those scenes of carnage which prevailed where the saints had been persecuted. XVI. 4-7.

The fourth vial, fulfilled in the overthrow of those governments which sustained the Papal power. XVI. 8, 9.

The fifth vial, fulfilled in the temporary conquest of Rome by the French arms. xvi. 10, 11.

The sixth vial, fulfilled in the decline of the Turkish power, the spread of Christianity in the East, and the rallying of Infidelity, Popery and Mohammedanism for the Battle of Armageddon. xvi. 12-16.

The seventh vial, fulfilled in the overthrow of the Papal power. xvi. 17-21. This overthrow is so important that it is described in additional visions. A representation of the Papal power, and its destruction, under the symbol of a drunken harlot. xvii. 1-18. A representation of the same power, and its destruction, under the symbol of a great city in ruins. xviii. 1-20. A representation of the same power, and its destruction, under the symbol of a millstone cast into the sea. xviii. 21-24. A song of victory by the heavenly host. xix. 1-9. A description of the mighty conqueror. xix. 11-16. A description of the final war, and the destruction of the Papal church. xix. 17-21.

The millennium. xx. 1-6.

The loosing of Satan, and his final imprisonment. xx. 7-10.

The last judgment. xx. 11-13.

The wicked are cast into hell. xx. 14, 15.

The righteous are admitted into heaven, which is described under the symbol of a beautiful city. xxi. 1-xxi. 6.

## V. THE CONCLUSION. xxii. 6-21.

In this division there is a solemn declaration that these things are true; a description of the effects of these visions on the apostle; a command to publish what he had seen; a description of the unchangeable condition of the righteous and the wicked in the world to come; a description of the blessedness of those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb; the name of the author of this book; a free gospel invitation; a solemn injunction not to change anything written in this book; a threefold announcement of the speedy coming of the Son of man; the church's response; and the apostle's benediction.

## LECTURE I.

### PREFATORY.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.—Rev. 1: 1-3.

I HAVE selected the book of the Revelation as the subject of a series of expository lectures, because I have not given it in the past as much study as I have bestowed on other portions of the Bible. I have not had a clear and distinct idea of its wonderful visions. Nor do I think I am alone in this regard. Christians generally regard the things written in this book, at least some of them, as things with which they have nothing to do at present. A little reflection must convince us that we are in error here. This book is a portion of the inspired word of God, which is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction. It is said of it, as well as of the rest of the Bible, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Of its contents it is said, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book." A peculiar blessing is pronounced, both at the beginning and at the close of the book, upon those who read and obey the revelations contained in it. Such considerations and promises as these should lead to its reverent and careful study.

I am not vain enough to flatter myself that I will remove the difficulties which are to be found in this portion of God's word. I do not start out with an ambition to utter what will be original or brilliant. I will carefully study this book, aided by all the helps which I can reach, and will bring to you the results of such investigations. When I meet with what I do not understand, I will freely acknowledge the fact. If I should become completely baffled in my attempts to fathom the meaning of the Spirit, I will at once suspend this series of lectures and try another more in accordance with my ability. Many have entered upon the study of this book with some preconceived theory to support. I have no such theory. While I have a general idea of the plan which should be adopted, an idea which I will explain at the proper time, I am ready to follow the leading of the Spirit of truth, as I may be able to understand it. My great object will be to discover the truth, to apply it to our hearts and

lives, to comfort our troubled souls, to inspire them with greater faith, and to prepare them for that unspeakable glory which is revealed in the concluding chapters of the book. That this object may be accomplished, I ask you to give such time and thought to the words to be considered as you may be able to give, to follow in your Bibles the verses as they will be taken up in their order one after another, and to pray that the word of God may have free course and be glorified. I do not ask you to accept any explanation because I may make it, but to search the Scriptures diligently and see whether these things are so.

The words which are to be considered in the present lecture constitute the inspired preface to this wonderful book. This preface contains a brief statement of the contents of the book, the name of its author, and a declaration of its value. To these three points I invite your attention. After having discussed these points, I will briefly refer to any others which I may think necessary to prepare the way for future exposition.

I. Let us consider **THE CONTENTS** of this book as they are described by the Spirit himself. The book is called the Revelation. The word which is thus translated has become familiar in its English dress. It is the Apocalypse. This book is almost as frequently called "the Apocalypse" as "the Revelation." But this name is sometimes confounded, especially by the young, with the Apocrypha, a name which is applied to those uninspired books which are found in some Bibles between the Old Testament and the New. There is a similarity in the names, but they have an opposite meaning. Apocrypha means that which is covered or hidden; Apocalypse means that which is uncovered or revealed.

This book is not only the Revelation, it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This does not mean, as many seem to think, that it is a revelation given by Jesus Christ, for in this respect it does not differ from any other book in the Bible. They are all given by Christ, and inspired by his Spirit. It means that it is a revelation of Jesus Christ; that is, it reveals Christ; it makes him known. It is true that in this sense the gospels are a revelation of Jesus Christ. They reveal him as the suffering, dying, buried Saviour of his people. They reveal him as he was when he came to earth to do his Father's will. This book reveals him in a new light. It reveals him as conqueror over his enemies and Lord over his earthly church, leading it to final victory, and making all things work together for its good. It also reveals him as the Supreme Judge of all the gathered multitudes of the universe. This book, then, is a revelation or apocalypse of Jesus Christ, different from any other which the Spirit has given us in the holy word. As the gospels contain a revelation of his first coming and of his earthly life, so this book contains a revelation of his heavenly life and of his second coming, when he shall come the second time without sin unto

salvation. Therefore, in the study of this book, we may expect to find such a revelation of Jesus Christ as is not vouchsafed to us elsewhere; we may expect to find descriptions of glory which will fill our souls with comfort and with unutterable longings for the things which are to be hereafter.

And this book is not only the Revelation of Jesus Christ, it is also the Revelation which "God gave unto him." We are clearly told in the New Testament, that the mediatorial kingdom, with all its glory, is the reward which the Saviour received from the Father when the great work of redemption was finished. We may therefore consider all the glory of the Messiah, revealed in this book, as the gift of God. We may also consider the revelation of this glory as the gift of God. It is made known to man by the will of God. And besides this, the revelation is a part of the glory, for even such glory would have been no glory, if it had continued for ever unknown.

The object of this God-given Revelation is "to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." By the servants of God are meant of course the true members of the church on earth. We must remember the circumstances in which these servants were placed, or we will not be able to understand the design of this book. They were to pass through great persecutions; men and devils were to be arrayed against them; error and Antichrist were to oppose them; their blood was to be poured out like water in the streets of every city. Against the coming of such dark days of persecution, the servants of God needed encouragement. If they were not encouraged and strengthened, they would think their God had forgotten them, and make shipwreck of their faith. What would strengthen them more than to forewarn them of the persecutions through which they had to pass, to assure them of the protection of their divine Lord and of their final triumph, and to reveal to them the everlasting glory of Christ in which they were to have a share? What would encourage them more than to reveal to them the history of the church and its divine Lord from that day until the time when all the great multitude of the redeemed should be gathered home? Therefore God, by this revelation, would show unto his servants "things which must shortly come to pass." This does not mean that he would reveal all things that were to come to pass, but only the main events in the history of the church, which it was important for the members of his church to be acquainted with. Nor does this declaration, of necessity, mean that all the things revealed would soon come to pass. It means that their fulfillment would shortly begin, though the complete fulfillment of all the things predicted might not be for ages in the future. It indicates a train of consecutive events whose beginning was at hand, but whose end might be very remote.

This Revelation of Jesus Christ was given by the ministry of an angel. "He sent and signified it by his angel." What particular angel was em-



ployed on this occasion, we have not been informed. All we know of him is summed up in his own words, "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book." From this, it has been thought that this angel was one of the old prophets, or some one who on earth had been a faithful member of the church, and that he was now honored by being permitted to reveal to his fellow servants on the earth the things of the future. And it is to be noticed, that this angelic messenger did not reveal these things so much by words as by signs. The word translated "signified" indicates that this revelation was to be made by symbols. The office of the angel was to make one magnificent picture after another pass before the eyes of the apostle. We must bear this in mind or we will not be able to understand the things which are written in this book. The whole book is a series of visions which were made to pass before the apostle like a great panorama. It was the province of the angel to unroll the panorama. How this was done I am not able to say; but that it was within the power of the angel, commissioned of God for this purpose, no one will deny. Nor am I able to say how far John understood the wonderful visions which he saw. Probably he understood them no better than we understand them, when we read the descriptions which he was inspired to write and which, preserved through all the centuries, are as full of comfort for us as they were for him.

II. Let us now turn to THE AUTHORSHIP of this book. This Revelation of Jesus Christ, which was given of God and signified by the angel, was recorded by John for the information of all coming time. There need be no doubt as to the John, to whom was accorded this high honor. It was the John "who bore record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." By the "word of God" is meant of course the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. Who was it that bore witness of this Word? Who was it that said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"? Who was it that bore testimony of Jesus Christ as the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us? Who was it that bore testimony of all the things he saw, when that incarnate Word tabernacled among men? To these questions, but one answer can be returned. It was John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the author of the Fourth Gospel, the beloved disciple who leaned upon the Master's breast.

If necessary, this reasoning might be strengthened and confirmed. There is a similarity in style and language between this book and the acknowledged writings of the apostle, which cannot be accidental, and which proves that the same author wrote them all. Of course there is a certain dissimilarity, but this dissimilarity must be expected, because the subjects discussed are very different; but the points of similarity are so many and so marked,

that they are sufficient to determine the author, even if his name had not been mentioned. Besides this, the concurring voice of the Christian fathers declares the author to be John, the beloved disciple. I need not repeat their testimony. It can be found in almost any of the commentaries on this book. It is sufficient to say that the authorship and genuineness were not called in question until the third century, when some, whose theories it endangered, ascribed it to a heretic. Notwithstanding this, no book of the New Testament has stronger external evidence in its favor. We may, therefore, be sure, as we pass from verse to verse, and from chapter to chapter, that we are studying the words of that disciple who was in a peculiar manner honored with the Saviour's love when he was here on earth.

III. We were to notice **THE VALUE** of this book. All Scripture is of value, but many have thought that the mysterious visions contained in this book are among the least valuable portions of Holy Writ. It must be admitted that there are in it many things which are hard to be understood. When we read over the many expositions of the Apocalypse, no two of which agree; when we study the different theories of interpretation which have been proposed, and find that they are as opposite as light and darkness; we may think that we might expend our time more profitably than in the study of a book, whose meaning seems to be beyond the reach of the finite mind. It would seem as if he, who gave this revelation of Jesus Christ, knew how men would be discouraged in their attempts to understand and explain it, and he has held out a special promise for their encouragement, a promise which seems to be peculiar to this book, and which shows its unspeakable value. "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." Over the very vestibule of this temple the hand of the Lord has written an invitation to enter, and this invitation contains a promise of blessedness, which is repeated in the inmost shrine; for in the last chapter, it is said, "blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

Surely, then, we have encouragement to enter upon the study of the Apocalypse. He that readeth these words is blessed. They that hear them read are blessed. They that keep them are blessed. Let us observe, and let us be thankful while we observe, that it is not said, he that fully understands the things written in this book is blessed. If this was the condition, none of us might hope for blessedness, for there are mysteries here which no man has yet been able to fathom. We may not be able to understand fully this book, but we can read it, we can hear it read, we can keep the things written in it as far as we are able to understand them; and as we can do all this, we are sure of the blessing. If we enter upon the study of this portion of the Scriptures in humble dependence on the Spirit and with earnest

prayers for divine enlightenment, we will be better able to understand what is meant by this blessedness in the future than we are at present.

There is a reason why we should be diligent in our study of this book: "for the time is at hand"; and if this reason had weight when the exile in Patmos wrote these words, nearly two thousand years ago, how much greater weight they must have now. As I have already intimated, I do not understand these words as meaning that the time was at hand for all the things written in this book to be fulfilled, but that the time was at hand for the fulfillment to begin, a fulfillment which has been going on through all the ages since, and which will continue till the end of the present order of things shall be reached.

There are two or three other points which should be noticed in this prefatory discourse, but I will notice them with brevity. One is *the place* where this book was written. It was written on the isle of Patmos. As we will have occasion to speak in a subsequent lecture of this island, and of the reasons why it was chosen as the place of the apostle's banishment, this point may be passed over for the present.

Another point is *the time* when this book was written. All the main opinions on this point may be reduced to two. The first is, that it was written in the reign of the emperor Nero; the other is, that it was written in the reign of the emperor Domitian. After reading carefully the evidence which has been brought forward in proof of each of these dates, I am of the opinion that the latter is correct, viz., that this book was written in the reign of Domitian, or about the year 96. Therefore, when John wrote this book, he must have been an old man; for though we do not know his exact age, yet he must have been born about the beginning of the Christian era. But it must not be thought that this is the last written book of the Bible. John did not write his gospel for two or three years after this time. This gospel must have the distinction of being the last words which have been preserved for us from an inspired pen. When the Apocalypse was written, John was an old man, almost one hundred years of age, the last survivor of the apostles. When he wrote it, all the other writers of the New Testament were mingling with the dust, and he survived only a few years longer, till he could put the finishing touch to the canon of inspiration in the gospel which bears his name.

## LECTURE II.

## INTRODUCTORY.

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.—REV. 1: 4-11.

IN my last lecture I considered the inspired preface to this book, which, from anything which appears in it, may have been written by John himself, or by some one else specially directed by the Spirit to do this work. In the subject of the present lecture, we have John's special introduction to the series of visions he was about to record. In this introduction, which prepares the way for the things to be revealed, we have the following points: 1. The usual salutation, verses 4, 5. 2. An ascription of praise, verses 5, 6. 3. The statement of an important fact, verse 7. 4. The Deity of the coming one, verse 8. 5. The circumstances in which the vision was seen, verses 9-11. To these points, in their order, I invite your attention.

I. Let us attend to *the usual salutation*. This book is an epistle or letter. In this respect, it does not differ from those books of the New Testament which follow the Acts of the Apostles. Paul's first recorded epistle was primarily addressed to the members of the Christian church in Rome, but it was also intended for all Christians the world over. So this book was primarily addressed to the churches of Asia, but it was also intended for all Christians everywhere. And as this book is an epistle, we would expect to find in it the salutation usual to the epistles of the apostolic age.

1. In this salutation we have *the name of the writer*. It is John. Though there were many of this name in the early church, there can be no doubt as to the particular John who is here described. The points of similarity between this book and John's gospel and epistles, and the overwhelming

testimony of the Christian fathers, must convince us that the author is no other than John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved. But mark the modesty of the apostle's saintly heart. He does not enumerate his titles and the offices he had filled and the books he had written, as modern authors delight to do ; he knew that the simple name was sufficient for the members of the churches to whom he was writing ; for to those among whom he had labored so long and so faithfully, there could be but one John.

2. We have *the persons* to whom the salutation is addressed, viz., "the seven churches of Asia." By "Asia" we are not to understand the continent of Asia ; nor are we to understand by it that large peninsula, which thrusts itself out from western Asia between the Mediterranean and Euxine seas, and which has for many centuries been known by the name of Asia Minor. It describes only a small portion of the western coast of that peninsula, that province of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital and the principal city, and which is generally called Proconsular Asia. It is in this restricted sense that the word is used in the Acts of the Apostles ; as for example in these passages : "All them that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus" ; "throughout all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away much people." In this Proconsular Asia, John had long preached the gospel. According to tradition, soon after he was left at liberty to depart from Jerusalem by the death of Mary, the Lord's mother, who had found a home in his house ever since the crucifixion, he came to Ephesus, and was chosen bishop or pastor of the church in that city. When he was banished from his field of labor, how natural it would be for him to remember those with whom he had been so intimately associated, and to send to them this epistle from the isle of Patmos. I need not now mention the names, or speak of the circumstances and history of the seven churches. It will be a more proper time for this, when we come to speak of the messages which were sent to them. It should, however, be remarked, that these were not all the Christian churches which had been established in that part of Asia Minor, but these seven were selected, either because they were the principal churches, or because the number seven is in Biblical language the symbol of completeness.

3. *The substance* of this salutation is grace and peace. It is worthy of mention that this is the substance of the salutation in every one of Paul's epistles, though in the epistles to Timothy and Titus he prays for "mercy" as well as "grace and peace," thereby seeming to teach us that ministers of the gospel, owing to the responsibility of their work, need mercy more than other men. These apostolic salutations were not meaningless forms ; they expressed the sincere wish of the writer's heart. The word "grace" in this connection includes in it all the favors of God, needful for time and eternity. The word "peace" includes in it peace of conscience, peace with

men, and peace with God, which the world can neither give nor take away. Therefore the salutation is equivalent to this: my heart's desire and prayer for you is, that divine favor and divine peace may be yours. Blessed are they for whom this prayer is offered, and in whose experience it is answered! And this is the unceasing prayer of the Christian church for all its members.

4. We have *the source* from which the apostle implores this blessing of grace and peace. It is from the triune God. It is from the Father, who is here described by a three-fold title; "him which is, and which was, and which is to come." This is but a translation of "Jehovah," the incommunicable name of God, which describes his eternal and uncreated existence. The Father exists now, he has existed in the past, he will exist in the future. He is the unchanging one, without beginning of days or end of years, the same yesterday, to-day and forever, from everlasting to everlasting. All this, and even more, is expressed to the reverent heart by the words "which is, and which was, and which is to come."

This blessing is implored from the Holy Ghost, who is also described by a three-fold title. He is a Spirit, he is the Seven Spirits, he is before the throne. The number seven, as I will have occasion to say again and again during the exposition of this book, is in Biblical language the symbol of completeness or perfection. Therefore the Holy Ghost is called "the Seven Spirits," because of the completeness and perfection, as well as the diversity of his operations; and he is said to be "before the throne," thereby indicating that he is ready and waiting to go forth and accomplish his work, viz., the sanctification of the church.

This blessing is also implored from Jesus, who is also described by a three-fold title. He is "the faithful witness." "To this end," as he himself tells us, "was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." He bore such witness during his life in the face of his enemies, and he sealed his witness-bearing with his blood on the cross. And he is also "the first begotten of the dead"; not that he was the first that came forth from the grave, for passing by the few instances recorded in the Old Testament, and the sheeted dead who after the resurrection were seen walking in the streets of Jerusalem, Jesus by his own power raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son, and Lazarus of Bethany. Jesus is the first begotten of the dead in that he is the most illustrious of the dead, and in that he was the first of them all who rose from death to immortality. The others who were raised died again; Jesus rose to die no more. He is also "the prince of the kings of the earth." He is exalted above kings of the earth as they are above their meanest subjects. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords."

This is the source from which the blessing is invoked. Let us comprehend it as well as we can. There is God the Father, the same in the past, the present and the future; there is God the Spirit, in all his perfect

and manifold operations; there is God the Son, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the head over all things for his church. A blessing from such a triune God has in it a blessedness, whose height and depth, and length and breadth, cannot be measured.

II. The apostle, having been led by this salutation to speak of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, breaks out in A LOFTY ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE.

1. *The object to whom this praise is ascribed is not mentioned by name, but there can be no doubt that he is none other than the Lord Jesus.* The exalted description which is here given is fulfilled in him alone. "Unto him that loved us," or as it is now agreed that the text should read, "unto him that loves us." There are others who love us, but the love of Jesus towers above theirs; there are others who have done much for us, but Jesus has done more than they all. We sometimes think of his great love as past; we speak of it as if it culminated in his sufferings on the cross; but not so. It is a present love. It neither increases nor diminishes. It is a free and undeserved love. It is a love which passeth knowledge.

"Unto him that loves us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Though the love of Jesus is a present love, this washing from sin is past. The atonement is a finished work. His sacrifice will never have to be repeated, for it is perfect. While the sanctification of the saints on earth is progressive, they are completely justified, adopted and pardoned, and they can say with as much truth as the saints in heaven, "he *has* washed us from our sins in his own blood." And if Jesus washed them from their sins in his own blood, he must have been a man, for he had blood to shed; he must have been a suffering man, for he shed that blood; he must have been more than a man, for no human blood has such efficacy; and he must have died, not merely as an example, but as an atonement, for by his blood sins were washed away.

"Unto him that loves us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." That Jesus should love us is a wonder; that he should wash us from our many and aggravated sins in his own blood almost surpasses our belief; but if we are Christians at all, we are not only loved and washed, but also made kings and priests. To love and pardon, are added kingly honor and priestly dignity. There is not a saint, however lowly, who is not a son of the Great King and a priest of the Most High God; and if he is a king, he must have a kingdom; if he is a priest, he must be holy.

2. *The praise ascribed to this glorious person is, that to him may be "glory and dominion forever and ever."* Jesus is worthy of this praise. He has accomplished a work which no one else could have done; he has a name which is above every name; and he has a kingdom which will

never end. Therefore, all those whom he loves, whom he has washed, and whom he has made a royal priesthood to his Father and God, may say both on earth and in heaven, "to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

III. This ascription of praise, which led the apostle to speak of the kingship and priesthood of the saints and of the everlasting dominion of Christ, reminds him that these things were not to be in all their fullness till A GREAT EVENT had taken place. He, therefore, makes a brief statement of that important event.

1. This event is stated in the words, "he cometh." The name of the coming one is not mentioned, but every one must know from the connection in which this verse is found, that the coming one is he who loves us and who has washed us and who has made us kings and priests. Jesus is to come again "the second time without sin unto salvation." When he was here on earth, he spake of that coming once and again; the apostles spake of it after his departure; the church has believed in it through all the ages of its history. Christians may differ as to the time and manner of his coming, but as to the fact all are agreed. And all agree that this coming must precede the fulfillment of the most of the glorious things which have been spoken of the church.

2. Notice *the importance* of this event, an importance which is here indicated by the word "behold," and in other parts of Scripture by the frequency with which it is referred to.

3. Notice *the glory* of his coming. "He cometh with clouds." The Scriptures represent the coming one as riding in a chariot of the clouds; and our finite minds can conceive of no greater manifestation of glory than that of him who maketh the clouds his chariot, and who rideth on the wings of the wind.

4. Notice *the publicity* of his coming. "Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." When he came the first time, his coming was almost unknown; only a very few knew of the babe who was born in Bethlehem's stable. But it will not be so when he comes the second time. "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "Every eye shall see him." The Gentile nations will behold him, and so will the Jews who rejected and crucified him. His true children will behold him, and so will those who have pierced him by their ingratitude and unbelief. Those who are alive on the earth will behold him, and so will the dead who shall be called from their graves to witness the glory of his coming. Those will behold him who say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him," and so will those who cry to the mountains and rocks, "fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne."



5. Notice *the sorrowfulness* of his coming to his enemies. "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." The coming of the Son of man will be an occasion of sorrow to all who have rejected him, whether they belong to the tribes of Israel, or to the kindreds of the Gentiles; because this event will bring their sins to remembrance, and because they will be overwhelmed with apprehensions of approaching wrath, which they can no longer hope to escape.

6. Notice *the emphatic expression* with which this statement concludes, "even so, amen"; an expression which indicates not only the certainty of the Lord's coming, but also the earnest wish of the apostle's heart that he might come quickly, a wish, in which every waiter for the heavenly consolation and for the glorious things which are to be will join. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

IV. THE DEITY OF THE COMING ONE is announced by himself. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." The event, which has just been predicted, has such an important bearing on our lives and happiness, that our faith in it needs to be confirmed; and what could furnish better confirmation than this sublime statement? The coming one is "Alpha and Omega." These, as you know, are the names of the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. If made in English, this statement would be, "I am the A and the Z"; that is, I am the first and the last; there was no one before me, and there will be no one after me.

And as the alphabet is the means of communicating truth, this expression may mean that the Saviour is the sum of all knowledge and the embodiment of all truth.

Again: the coming one is "the beginning and the ending." This clause is not found in the earliest manuscripts and the best versions. It has probably been inserted by some transcriber to explain the preceding clause, of which it is an equivalent. Both express the Saviour's eternity.

Again: the coming one is he "which is, and which was, and which is to come." This sublime description was, in verse 4, applied to the Father; and as it was there explained, it need not detain us now. But as the same description is here applied to the Son, it follows that the second person of the Trinity is equal with the first. If one is Jehovah, so is the other; if one is eternal and immutable, so is the other.

Again: the coming one is "Almighty." He can have no greater name than this, for it includes all power. And as he has all power, he will come at the very time and in the very manner he has promised. May this statement of the Deity of the coming one not only confirm our faith in his coming, but also inspire us to be diligent in preparing for his great appearing!

What his  
language  
has meant  
I am not  
certain

V. I invite your attention to THE CIRCUMSTANCES in which this vision was seen. You will remember that I have described this book as a series of visions, which the ministering angel unrolled before the eyes of the apostle like a great panorama. Let us sketch the surroundings of the apostle when this panorama was unrolled, and as they are revealed to us in verses 9-11. The seer of this vision was John, the apostle. Though he was the last survivor of the apostles, and the most distinguished member of the Christian church on earth, he claims for himself no higher honor than to be a companion and brother of the saints. He was one with them in tribulation, for the same persecutions and afflictions had befallen them all. He was one with them in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, for they would be partakers of the same glory, and the heirs of the same inheritance when their present sufferings were ended. He was one with them in patience, for they all had to manifest the same Christ-like endurance.

When John saw his wonderful vision, he was an exile in the island of Patmos, a little, barren, rocky island, which lies out in the open sea not far from the coast of western Asia Minor, and which was made a penal colony for the adjacent provinces. If tradition can be believed, John and his fellow exiles were sentenced to penal labor in the mines of Patmos. But though John was an exile and a companion of criminals, he had been guilty of no crime. He had been banished "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"; that is, he had been banished because he had been faithful in preaching the word of God and in bearing testimony to the divine mission of Jesus in the city of Ephesus, in which God had called him to labor. While he was an exile in this barren island of Patmos, on a certain Sabbath, the Holy Spirit came and took possession of his faculties. His eyes no longer saw the bleak rocks and walls of his island prison; they looked through the open gate of heaven and saw a vision, the like of which was never vouchsafed to any other dweller here on earth. His ears no longer heard the dashing waves of the Mediterranean sea against the rocky shores; they heard a great voice from heaven, a voice as loud and clear as a trumpet. It was the voice of one who announced himself, in the figurative language which has already been explained, as from everlasting to everlasting, who commanded him to write in a book the things he was about to see, and to send the written book to the seven churches of Asia, which are mentioned by name. No wonder John was astonished. No wonder he turned quickly to see him who could speak such language in such a voice; but what he saw when he turned, even the first great vision in the glorious panorama, must be reserved for consideration in another lecture.

In the meantime, let us prepare ourselves by prayer and meditation for those things we expect to see. We have now passed through the introduction, and are ready to enter upon the Apocalypse itself. We have en-

tered the building, we have listened to the explanatory lecture, the lights have been extinguished, and we are patiently waiting for the great scenes, painted by the Spirit of God, to be unrolled. God help us to understand them when the unrolling begins, and to his name be all the praise !

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## LECTURE III. .

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### THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS.

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks ; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow ; and his eyes were as a flame of fire ; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace ; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars : and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword : and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last : I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter ; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches : and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.—REV. 1 : 12-20.

WHEN John turned to see the speaker, he saw sights and heard words which he was moved to record for our instruction, and which we are to consider in the present lecture. In the words which have been announced as the subject of lecture, there are three points to which I invite your attention : the vision itself ; its effects on the apostle ; and its explanation.

I. In accordance with this plan, we are, in the first place, to notice **THE VISION**. While we consider and attempt to explain what John saw, we must remember that he was a Jew ; that he was familiar with the writings of the old prophets ; that he was well acquainted with the rites and ceremonies of Jewish worship ; that he had often stood in the courts of the temple at Jerusalem, and watched the priests and levites as they performed the duties to which they had been appointed, before that temple was made a ruin by the armies of Rome ; and therefore we may expect to find his vision tinged with light reflected from the Old Testament and from the temple service. This expectation is fully realized. The entire passage leads us to believe that John saw in vision a magnificent temple court, similar to the holy place in the tabernacle of Moses and in the temple of Solomon, but it had a brightness and a glory which the tabernacle and the temple never knew. The apostle does not

stop to describe the general appearance and furniture of this beautiful and holy room, which the ministering angel caused to pass before his eyes with all the vividness of reality. There were two objects which at once caught his eye and enchained his attention, which are so glorious in themselves, and which have such an important bearing on all the subsequent visions, that they only are thought worthy of description.

1. When John turned to see who it was that spake to him, he saw "seven golden candlesticks." The word "candlestick" at once carries us back to the directions which were given to Moses for the building of the tabernacle. He was commanded to make a candlestick of pure gold, with three branches coming out of one side, and three branches coming out of the other side. These six branches, together with the main stem, formed seven branches, each one of which was crowned with a lamp to give light to the holy place. This candlestick was placed on the left side of the holy place, as one looked towards the ark of the covenant, and opposite the table of shew bread. A similar candlestick was made by Solomon and placed in the same relative position in the temple.

It should, however, be noticed that the translation "candlestick" does not exactly express the meaning of the original, either in the description of the tabernacle or in John's vision. The instrument he saw was not an instrument for holding candles, but for holding lamps; for lamps, and not candles, were then used for illuminating purposes. Therefore it would be a better translation to say, "I saw seven golden lamp-stands."

There was this noticeable difference between what John saw and the lamp-stand of the Old Testament. That was one massive piece of furniture, but John saw seven candlesticks. Though the proper time for explaining the meaning of this vision is in a subsequent part of my lecture, I cannot refrain from saying here that this difference seems to shadow forth one great difference between the Jewish and the Christian church. The Jewish church was one, one in its organization as well as in its faith and worship; the Christian is not one in its organization, though it has one Lord, one faith and one baptism. Then there was but one candlestick, now there are seven; but the Old Testament candlestick, like those of the New, held up the lamps to give light in all the world.

These candlesticks were of gold. In this respect they resembled the furniture of the holy place in the old dispensation. There, everything was made of gold except the heaviest articles, and they were overlaid with gold. No one can read this book without being astonished at the number of emblems which are said to be fashioned out of this most precious metal. There are the golden girdle, and the golden crowns, and the golden vials, and the golden censer, and the golden altar, and the golden rod, and the golden streets of the celestial city. No doubt the preciousness of the church, and of all things belonging to the church, is thus indicated. And throughout

the ancient East, gold was regarded as a sacred metal, the only metal which was worthy to be used in the worship of the Deity. Therefore the gold emblems in the apostle's visions indicate the sacredness as well as the preciousness of the church of God.

2. John does not stop to tell us how these golden candlesticks were grouped in the holy place, but they were so arranged that a man might walk in the midst of them. And there was one walking in the midst of them, on whom the apostle's attention became riveted. This is the second recorded object in his two-fold vision. Of this glorious person John gives us a minute description, which we will follow step by step.

In the first place, he was like "the Son of man." And who is the Son of man? Who was it that Daniel called by this name? Who was it that called himself by this name? It was the Lord Jesus Christ. But this name is applied to him when he appears in human form. Therefore the one whom John saw walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks was Jesus Christ; not, however, Jesus Christ clothed in all the glory of his divinity, but Jesus Christ as man. John had not forgotten the personal appearance of his Lord, though sixty years had passed away since he had been permitted to look upon his face; and though he had then seen Christ only in his estate of humiliation, he at once recognizes him in the midst of all this glory as the same Son of man on whose breast he had leaned at the supper.

Again: this Son of man was "clothed with a garment down to the foot." The prophet Daniel, who saw the Saviour in a similar vision, tells us that his robe was linen. A linen robe, long and full, was the usual dress of the kings and priests of the old economy.

Again: this Son of man was "girt about the paps with a golden girdle." In the olden time, those who were engaged in active labor girded their robes tightly about their loins, so that these robes might not interfere with the work they had to do. Josephus tells us that the priests were girded about the breasts; and it is obvious that this higher cincture could be used only by those whose stations did not require active labor, or those whose active labor was ended. And as the Son of man was girded in this way, it implies that his great work was accomplished, and that he had entered upon the enjoyment of his reward. And the girdle, and not merely the clasp with which it was fastened, was of precious and sacred gold; or, as Daniel describes it in a similar passage, "of the fine gold of Uphaz."

Again: the head and the hairs of the Son of man were "white like wool, as white as snow." This Son of man was "the ancient of days" whom the prophet saw and of whom the prophet said, "the hair of his head was like pure wool." This appearance indicated the antiquity, the dignity and the majesty of him who was walking in the midst of the candlesticks; for it is true the world over as the Scriptures tell us, "the hoary head is a crown of glory."

Again: the eyes of the Son of man were "as a flame of fire." They were bright, sharp, penetrating; they could see all things everywhere; they are the eyes of him of whom it is said, "his eyes see, and his eyelids try the children of men"; "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." If I mistake not, these flaming eyes of the Son of man indicate the power of his wrath against all those in whom he sees iniquity and rebellion.

Again: the feet of the Son of man were "like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Fine brass, glowing in the furnace, has all impurity burned out of it, and is of a dazzling whiteness and beauty. Such are the feet with which the Son of man walks in the midst of the churches, and up and down among the nations of the earth. They are beautiful to those who fear him, and terrible to those on whom they tread.

Again: the voice of the Son of man was "as the sound of many waters." It is a voice which will sound through all time, which will arouse even the dead who are in their graves, which believers will hear, and from which unbelievers cannot escape: The figure which John employs is one which would naturally be suggested to him by the circumstances in which he was placed. By night and by day his ears would be filled with the roar of the billows as they dashed against the rocky coast of Patmos. All those who have stood beside the ocean and listened to its mighty thunder, will appreciate the majesty of him whose voice is "as the sound of many waters."

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Again: the Son of man "had in his right hand seven stars." According to the custom of the kings of the East, there were rings on his hands. These rings sparkled with jewels, but these jewels were not diamonds or rubies, or any precious gems of earth; every jewel was a shining star. These emblems are afterwards explained by the Son of man himself.

Again: out of the mouth of the Son of man "went a sharp two-edged sword." I do not understand this to mean that John saw a sword issuing from the mouth of him who walked in the midst of the golden candlesticks, for there is an incongruity in this idea, which is not in keeping with the rest of the vision. I believe the meaning to be this: that which proceeded out of his mouth, that is, his word, was like a sharp two-edged sword. This is in perfect harmony with what is said of that word elsewhere. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." And this is a truthful description of the word. Nothing can stand before it; it has two edges; it cuts both ways; it kills and it cures; by it, some are saved, and others are destroyed. Let us then in forming a mental picture of John's vision, regard this clause as if it read, "the word of his mouth was like a sharp two-edged sword."

Again: the countenance of the Son of man was "as the sun shineth in

his strength." Churches are lamps; ministers are stars; but Christ is the sun. As the sun is the most glorious object in the natural world, it is an appropriate emblem of him who is the only begotten of the Father, and God over all, blessed forever more.

This was John's glorious vision. Let us get as clear an idea of it as we can, for otherwise we will not be able to understand either its effects on the apostle or its explanation. There is unrolled before our eyes the picture of a sanctuary which resembles the holy place of the Jewish temple. In that sanctuary we see seven lamp-stands of pure gold, and one walking in their midst, whose dress and appearance indicate him to be both a priest and a king. Beauty and majesty, love and tenderness, power and wrath are all to be seen in the countenance of the kingly priest and the priestly king. Oh, that I had power to make this picture so vivid that it might have on us something of the same effect that it had on the apostle!

II. For it did have A WONDERFUL EFFECT on him. "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." These visions of spiritual things must inspire the human heart with terror. They show us the existence of another world, only a little way beyond this, and separated from it by a thin veil, which will one day be removed. They hint, not darkly, at the intimate relations which we sustain to that world, and at the terrible consequences which will result, if we do not prove faithful to those relations. Therefore, such visions have overcome all to whom they have been vouchsafed. Daniel, who stood unmoved in the presence of kings and in the den of lions, was left without strength in him, when his eyes were opened to see the things which were beyond the present. So it was with Ezekiel, and with Isaiah, and with John, and with all the rest who have passed through a similar experience. And these men were familiar with the things of God. If they were thus affected by the revelations of the future, how much greater should be the effect produced on us? And yet we sometimes long for such revelations. Let us rather thank God that such longings are not gratified. Those who claim to hold communication with the spirit world must be mistaken, for their pretended revelations do not produce the inevitable effect of such revelations which is always seen in the lives of the prophets in the olden time, and which must always accompany the unfolding of the eternal and the invisible. But these things will be revealed by and by. When we die, they will be seen, not dimly as John saw them, but in all their ineffable splendor. If John's vision had such an effect on him, what effect will the revelations of death have on us, especially if we have not, by faith and prayer, made ourselves familiar with the hidden things of God?

It seems there was another reason for John's overwhelming emotion. He recognized that glorious one who was walking in the midst of the

golden candlesticks as his risen Lord. He had a peculiar love for Jesus. When Jesus was here on earth, he and his Saviour were almost inseparable. But he had not seen the Lord's face since that Lord had gone up from the summit of Olivet some sixty years before, and he did not expect to see that face again till he himself had passed over the river. But now, in an unexpected hour, he saw one who reminded him of the Son of man. Could it be the Son of man? He looked again; he saw the countenance he remembered so well, as he had once seen it transfigured on the mountain, but clothed with a glory and a radiance far brighter. It was his risen Saviour, and he fell at his feet as if dead.

III. We were to consider THE EXPLANATION of this vision. Before the priest-king could explain to John the things he had seen, it was necessary to administer comfort. Accordingly he laid his hand upon the apostle and said unto him, "fear not." By this assuring touch and these assuring words, John is strengthened and prepared to understand the vision.

In the first place, he who walked in the midst of the candlesticks revealed himself to the apostle; not that John had any doubts as to who he was, but to strengthen John's faith in what he was. He is "the first and the last"; words which here, as before, describe the Son of man as eternal and unchangeable. He is the living one, for the words translated "I am he that liveth," would be better translated "the living one." The Son of man has life in himself; he depends on no other for existence; therefore, he is God. He is the one who "was dead," and whom John's loving hands had helped to bury in the sepulchre of Joseph. Though he was once dead, he was now alive "forever more," and over him death would have no power. This statement is confirmed by the emphatic "amen." He had "the keys of hell and of death." By "hell," is not meant the place of the lost, for this place is described by a very different word in the original. It means the place or state of the dead, without reference to their happiness or misery. When Jesus claims to have the "keys of hades and of death," it means that he has all power over the invisible world, and over Satan who has the power of death.

This revelation must have strengthened and comforted the apostle; but it was given not only to strengthen and comfort him, but also to lay the foundation for an important command. The connection between this revelation and the commandment of verse 19 is not marked in our translation, for our translators have unaccountably omitted the word "therefore," which is found in all the manuscripts and in almost all the versions. "Therefore," because I, who make these revelations, am the first and the last, the living one who have the keys of invisible hades and of death itself, "therefore write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and



the things which shall be hereafter." These words contain a synopsis of this book, and furnish the key to unlock its meaning. John was to "write the things which he had seen"; that is, this vision of the tabernacle, and of the candlesticks, and of the royal priest. But he was also to write "the things which are"; that is, he was to describe the church as it then existed in the world, its imperfections, its faith, its trials and its triumphs. This command he obeyed in the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, which are contained in chapters II and III. He was also to write "the things which shall be hereafter"; that is, the things which were to be from that day till the end of time. This commandment he obeyed in that part of the book which begins with chapter IV. Let us bear this synopsis in mind, and we will have no little assistance in understanding this book.

The royal priest, having thus explained who he himself was, proceeds to explain the other part of the vision. The stars and the candlestick are called a "mystery," a word which in Biblical language means something which man cannot understand if left to himself, but which he can understand if explained by God; and according to this divine expounder, "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches"; not holy angels, but pastors. Pastors are so called because they are light-givers. According to the same divine expounder, "the seven candlesticks are the seven churches." They are so called because they are light-bearers. And as the stars were seven, and the candlesticks seven, the number of completeness and perfection, it follows, that though these epistles were primarily addressed to the churches of Asia, they are also intended for all ministers and all churches everywhere. Therefore, when we enter upon the explanation of the epistles to the seven churches, let us expect to find lessons of instruction and comfort for ourselves. The churches to which these epistles were written have had no existence for centuries, the very cities in which they flourished have fallen into ruins, but there are counterparts of Ephesus, and Smyrna, and Philadelphia, and all the rest, scattered through Christendom, and the words of the inspired seer of Patmos are as full of meaning now as ever. May God open our eyes to see and understand the things he has written for our edification!

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## LECTURE IV.

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### THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS.

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne,

and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.—REV. 2: 1-7.

THE great high priest commanded the exiled apostle, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." He obeys the first part of this three-fold command in chapter I. We now enter upon the second part of the revelation, a part which has reference to the things which then existed in the world, and which is comprised in the epistles to the seven churches of Asia. These epistles describe the actual condition of the churches to which they are addressed. Of course, I do not exclude their representative character. Human nature is the same in all ages; the duties, temptations and trials of all churches are in a measure the same; and therefore the words addressed to one are to a certain extent applicable to all. Besides this, the number seven, the symbol of completeness, indicates the universality of these epistles. We may, then, in our study of these epistles, expect to find much that is suited to ourselves, and to the circumstances of the church at the present day.

Why the churches whose names are mentioned in the context were chosen, is impossible to say. They were not the largest and most celebrated churches of that time, but they have been lifted to a high place as the representatives of the church of God. The cities in which these churches were planted were all in Proconsular Asia, the most westerly province of Asia Minor. They may be described as placed on a curved line, somewhat in the form of a horse shoe, so that a traveler might visit them in the order in which their names stand in this book. From Ephesus, which is the nearest to Patmos, and distant from it about forty miles, he would go north to Smyrna, fifty miles; thence north to Pergamos, sixty miles; thence east to Thyatira, thirty miles; thence south to Sardis, forty miles; thence south-east to Philadelphia, thirty miles; thence south-east to Laodicea, fifty miles. Of these seven cities, three were on the Egean coast; the others were inland.

The seven epistles are all fashioned after the same model. In each one, there are the following points: 1st. The command to write. 2d. One or more titles which the Saviour claims for himself, and which are generally drawn from that revelation of Christ which is contained in chapter I. 3d. The actual message from Christ to the church, in which the Saviour, after declaring his intimate knowledge of its condition, rebukes, or praises, or admonishes, as the circumstances of the church may require. 4th. A solemn exhortation to every one to hear what the Spirit had to say to the churches. 5th. A beautiful promise to every one who overcomes.

Let us now turn to the epistle to the church of Ephesus, and let us notice the five parts into which it may be divided.

I. THE COMMAND to write is as follows: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write." Ephesus was the chief city of Ionia, the civil and ecclesiastical centre of that Asia with which we have to do. It was wealthy and prosperous. While it was famous in heathen history on many accounts, it was especially famous on account of the temple of Diana, which was reckoned among the seven wonders of the world. But Ephesus had a still better title to honor. In the matter of Christianity it was a favored city. Paul labored there for three years with marked success. Timothy exercised his ministry there for a time. Apollos, Aquilla and Priscilla, and others, whose names are famous, were connected with the Ephesian church. Judging from Paul's words when he took leave of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, and from his epistle to the Ephesians, the church in that city was a highly prosperous one. John had labored there for a considerable portion of his life, and for this church he must have had a peculiar affection. Perhaps this is the reason why the epistle to the church of Ephesus stands first among the epistles.

This epistle is addressed, not to the churches of Ephesus, but to the church of Ephesus. It would seem, from the length of time since the gospel had been preached there, and from the success which had attended its preaching, as indicated in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, that there must have been many believers in the city; so many that they could not all meet for worship in one place; still all Christians there were regarded as members of one church. And this epistle was not addressed directly to the church itself; but to the angel, or minister, or bishop of the church. A pastor is the angel or messenger of God to those to whom he ministers; he brings to them messages of instruction, peace and pardon, and thus acts the part of an angel.

II. THE TITLES, which the Saviour claims for himself, are revealed in these words: "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." These titles are quoted from the preceding chapter, and they identify the speaker in this epistle with the great high priest whom John saw in his preliminary vision. As these titles have already been explained, they need not detain us now. Christ holds the seven stars, the ministers of the churches, in his right hand; he has absolute control over them; they are to go where he sends them, and to do what he bids them, and to speak what he commands them. Christ also walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, which are the churches. He is acquainted with them all; he knows how they are performing their Christian duties and living the Christian life. He can continue the ordinances in any church or remove them

from it. It was important for the church of Ephesus to know this, and it is no less important for us to have the same knowledge. If ministers do not remember that they are in Christ's right hand, they will become unfaithful in duty; if churches do not remember that Christ is walking in their midst, they will grow careless in light giving, and their candlestick will be removed out of its place.

III. THE ACTUAL MESSAGE which the Saviour sends to the church, is contained in verses 2-6.

1. We have an explicit statement of *the Saviour's intimate knowledge* of the condition of the Ephesian church. "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted." "I know thy works," is the common formula with which all the epistles are introduced. It was designed to impress them deeply with the conviction that the Saviour was acquainted with all they did, and therefore abundantly qualified to bestow rewards or administer punishments. It must not be forgotten that the word "works," as used in this formula, does not refer simply to outward actions; it refers to the thoughts of the heart as well as the deeds of the hands; it declares that all things are naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

The particular works which the Saviour knew, he proceeds to mention. He knew their "labor." Their labors were neither few nor small. There was a great vineyard to cultivate in Ephesus; there was a ripening harvest to reap, and the members of the church there were not backward in doing the Lord's will. In their times of discouragement, they may have thought that their Lord knew nothing of what they had to do, but he here assures them that he was intimately acquainted with their labors. This thought must have encouraged them, and it should encourage us who are engaged in similar labors.

Christ also knew their "patience." Though their labors had not been crowned with immediate success, still they labored on. When there was opposition to their preaching, they bore it patiently; when false teachers tried to undermine the church they had builded, they bore it patiently; when members of the church did not do honor to their profession, they bore it patiently; when the heathen hardened their hearts against their ministry and laughed them to scorn, they bore it patiently. And while they bore all these things patiently, they labored on, hoping for better things to come. Patience is necessary to any successful labor, but it is especially necessary in labor for Christ, because of the formidable obstacles in the way of immediate success.

Christ also knew that they could "not bear them which are evil." There were evil doers around, if not within, the Ephesian church, but the true members of that church had no sympathy with them; they gave them no countenance; they extended to them no fellowship; they exercised towards them necessary discipline. This is one of the hardest things a church has to do; and when it is faithful, it deserves and receives commendation.

Christ also knew that they had "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars." False teachers had visited this church as well as others; they claimed to have great authority; they demanded for themselves the honor and obedience which belonged to the inspired apostles; they pretended to have equal rank with Peter, James and John; but the Ephesians investigated their claims and found them to be groundless. These men were not apostles—they were not even true ministers—they were liars; they claimed to be what they were not. A true and pure ministry is important for every church; and every church which exercises care in this regard deserves commendation.

Christ also knew that they had "borne"; that is, that they had borne the trials, persecutions and afflictions which had fallen to their lot. Though the saints know that trials are a necessary part of the discipline of life, yet even they sometimes murmur when trials come.

Christ also knew that they "had patience, and for his name's sake had labored and had not fainted." There is this difference between the patience referred to here and the patience referred to in verse 2: that refers to patience under labor; this to patience under trial. There are many things to do and to bear for Christ and for the advancement of his cause, and those who do and bear these things with patience are the ones whom the Saviour will own and bless.

2. It is to be observed that in all these things the members of the church in Ephesus are commended. The Lord, by implication at least, praises them for their labor and patience, for their faithfulness against evil men and false teachers, and for the manner in which they had borne their many trials. But they also needed *rebuke*, which is faithfully administered. This rebuke is the second part of the actual message. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The word "somewhat" is a supplement of the translators, which weakens the sense. It implies that it was a little thing which the Lord had against his Ephesian church, whereas it was a great thing. The idea would have been more accurately expressed in this way: "Nevertheless I have this against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The church is here, as in many other places in the Scriptures, compared to a bride. In the days of their espousals their love for their divine husband was ardent, but there had been a sad falling away. Though the church was yet faithful in the discharge of her outward duties, though she patiently labored and patiently bore her

trials, yet there was not the same affection which once existed. She did not take the delight in communing with her Lord, in doing his will, and in meditating upon his perfections she once did. She was therefore in danger. If this falling away was not stopped, the most disastrous results would follow.

3. The Lord saw the danger, and he addresses words of *earnest exhortation* to the declining church. This exhortation is the third part of the message. "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works." He exhorts the members of the Ephesian church to call to remembrance their former state, its joy, its zeal, and its love. Nothing is better adapted to reclaim a backsliding Christian or a backsliding church, than to remember the happy days of early love. The joy then experienced, the honor then reflected on religion, the good then done, the peace of mind then enjoyed, contrasting strongly with present unhappiness, must lead towards repentance. The Saviour also exhorts the members of the Ephesian church to repent. They were to sorrow over all their transgressions, to turn from them unto God, and to do as they had done in the ardor of their early Christian life. They were to show the same love, and the same zeal, and the same untiring energy which they showed when they were first brought into the church. They were to do for their own sanctification, for the salvation of others and for the glory of God, as they did when their hearts first throbbed with the love of Christ.

4. This exhortation, as is frequently the case, is enforced by a *threatening*. "Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." A candlestick is a symbol of the church; and to remove the candlestick from any place signifies the removal of the church with all its blessings. It is to be observed that the threatening is not that the church will be destroyed, but that it will be removed. And so it has been. Ephesus did not repent and do its first works, and the church has been removed from that place; but the church still exists elsewhere, and it still performs its mission by holding up the light of the world. How literally this threatening has been fulfilled, every recent visitor testifies. One modern traveler tells that he found but three Christians there, and they were so ignorant that they had hardly heard of Paul or of John.

5. As if for fear that this rebuke might overwhelm the members of the church in Ephesus, the Saviour once more turns to something good he had seen in them: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Who were these hated Nicolaitanes? Some have supposed that they were a sect of heretics, who took their name from Nicolas the deacon, or from some other man of the same name. But there is no evidence that such a sect existed in the early church, at least not before the beginning of the third century. Probably there was no

such sect in Ephesus. As the other names used in this book, as for example, Sodom, Egypt and Babylon, are symbols, we may safely conclude that this name is symbolical. In order to determine who are described by this name, we must discover its meaning. Nicolas is derived from two Greek words, and means "a destroyer of the people." Balaam is derived from two Hebrew words, and means "a destroyer of the people." We may therefore conclude that the Nicolaitanes are the same persons who are described elsewhere as the followers of Balaam. As I will have occasion hereafter to speak of the peculiarities of these Balaamites, a remark or two is all that is necessary in the present connection. The first great danger which threatened the Christian church was from Judaizing teachers. They sought to lead Christians back to the observance of circumcision and of all the rites of the law of Moses. After this danger had passed, another and a greater one threatened the church. There were those who tried to introduce into it the freedom and license of heathen worship. They taught that the gospel was a gospel of liberty, and that believers in the gospel were to do as they chose. These heathen seducers are, I believe, the persons who are called Balaamites and Nicolaitanes, for this is given as the sum and substance of their doctrine. They cast a stumbling block before the people of God, and taught them to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. Those who held and taught such doctrines as these were hated by the members of the church in Ephesus, and the Saviour commends them for it. Having been compelled to speak sharp words, he will also speak tenderly. Having been compelled to wound, he will also heal. He therefore concludes his message with these words of praise, for it is no small praise to be reckoned among those who love what Christ loves, and who hate what Christ hates.

IV. THE SOLEMN EXHORTATION to heed the epistle is contained in these words: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This expression occurs at the close of each one of the seven epistles. Similar expressions were often used by our Lord when on earth. It is a solemn call to hear, to notice, and to obey. And this exhortation shows that the epistle to the church of Ephesus was intended for all churches, for it is not said, "he that belongeth to the church of Ephesus, let him hear," but "he that hath an ear, let him hear."

V. THE BEAUTIFUL PROMISE to the final victor is: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." There is a paradise of God. There is in it the tree of life. Some are to eat of the fruit of that tree. Who are they? Not all who are born into the world; not all who have said, "Lord, Lord." They only who overcome besetting sins and trials, and the world and Satan, and every enemy, may hope to inherit this blessedness.

We have a battle to fight; we have enemies to conquer; we often grow discouraged; but we have this gracious promise to inspire us. God grant that we may be among the victors who will eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God!

## LECTURE V.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA.

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.—Rev. 2: 8-11.

THE epistle to the church of Smyrna contains the five parts which have been mentioned as belonging to each of the seven epistles: 1st. The command to write. 2d. The titles which the Saviour claims for himself. 3d. The actual message. 4th. The solemn admonition to hear and heed. 5th. The beautiful promise to the victor. These five points will be considered in order, but of course the most time will be given to those which differ from the epistle to the church of Ephesus, discussed in the last lecture.

I. THE COMMAND TO WRITE this epistle is, "unto the angel" that is, the minister, or pastor, or bishop, "of the church in Smyrna write." The only thing in this command which requires attention, is the city in which the church addressed was located. Smyrna was one of the chief cities of Asia; and of course I use the word "Asia" in that restricted sense which has been defined. It was situated—I might say, it is situated, for it is the only one of the seven churches which has survived the desolation of the ages—on the Egean sea, about fifty miles north of Ephesus. It is one of the ancient cities of that part of the world; and though it has been devastated by wars, and overthrown by earthquakes, it has always retained something of its wealth and commerce. It was a beautiful city. Its streets were laid out at right angles with each other, and its palaces took high rank even among the magnificent palaces of the East. In the days of the apostle, its inhabitants called it "the pride of Asia," a name which was not wholly undeserved. It is still a city of considerable importance, having upwards of one hundred thousand inhabitants.



Such was the city in which the church was established, to which John was commanded to write. We learn, from the contents of this epistle, that that church differed somewhat from the church in Ephesus. The church in Ephesus was diligent in the discharge of all outward duties, but it was forsaking its first love. For that, it was commended; for this, it was rebuked. In the church of Smyrna, the Spirit finds nothing to rebuke sharply or to praise highly. It was small, poor in this world's goods, surrounded by enemies, called to pass through the fires of persecution; but it was rich in grace, and the heir of the crown of life. But extended remarks on the condition of the church in Smyrna will be more appropriate when we come to consider the Saviour's actual message to that church.

- II. THE TITLES which the Saviour claims for himself are expressed in these words: "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive." These titles are quoted from the introductory vision of chapter I. There the great high priest had said of himself, "I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more."
- Christ here claims for himself the attributes of an eternal and unchangeable existence. No one was before him, for he is the first; no one can be after him, for he is the last. Through all duration, from that unknown beginning to that unknown end, he is "without variableness or shadow of turning." I will not attempt to prove, either from reason or revelation, that the Saviour is eternal and unchangeable. I will take this for granted, and will refer only to the appropriateness of these titles to the case in hand. This epistle is addressed, as I have intimated, to a tried and persecuted church. But when trials and persecutions come, how it sustains and comforts those who are compelled to pass under the rod, to remember that though their outward circumstances may change, and they may in some measure change in them, yet God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever; that he is the first and the last, and that his love for them never changes. And there is a beautiful propriety in the other title which the Saviour claims for himself, "he who was dead and is alive." The members of the church in Smyrna were exposed to dangers, and many of them were to be called to seal their testimony with their blood. And surely it would strengthen them to be reminded that their Saviour, in whom they trusted, could sympathize with them, for he had suffered persecution and experienced the pangs of a painful death; and that he could reward them, for though he was dead once, he was now alive forever more. No titles, among all the titles of the Saviour, could be more appropriate in the present case. To the members of the church in Smyrna, persecuted, imprisoned, and dying, there could be no words of greater strength, or sweeter sympathy, or profounder consolation than these with which the Saviour introduces his epistle; "these things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive."

III. THE SAVIOUR'S ACTUAL MESSAGE is contained in verses 9 and 10. This message consists of two parts: 1st. A declaration of the Saviour's intimate knowledge of the condition of things in Smyrna. 2d. A solemn exhortation to be fearless and faithful. The declaration of the Saviour's *knowledge* is contained in verse 9. "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." We have here the common formula, which introduces the actual message in each one of the seven epistles, "I know thy works," an expression which points to the omnipresence and omniscience of the Saviour, and which is well calculated to prepare and sober the heart for the explicit statement which is to follow.

The Saviour knew the "tribulation" of his people in Smyrna. The force and beauty of our word "tribulation" will be increased, if we call to mind its etymology. It is derived from the Latin word "tribulum," the name of a threshing instrument in common use among the farmers of the Roman empire. This instrument consisted of a wooden frame, not unlike a modern harrow, underneath which were fastened sharp pieces of iron or stone. When the sheaves were laid upon the threshing floor, this instrument was dragged over them, cutting the straw in pieces and loosening the grain from the chaff. This process, by a figure of speech, describes those who are in affliction. When the people of God are suffering from calamity, or persecution, or sickness, or bereavement, they are in tribulation, they are under the sharp threshing instrument of the divine husbandman; but it is for their good; for though they are bruised and broken by it, their precious wheat is separated from the worthless chaff. Through such tribulation, the members of the church in Smyrna were passing, and their Saviour knew it. What the source of their tribulation was, we are not informed; but from what follows we may be sure that, among other things, they were being threshed and beaten fine as dust by poverty and persecutions and imprisonments, and it could not be otherwise than comforting to them to be assured that he who had himself been called to pass under the rod, but was now exalted to glory, was intimately acquainted with their tribulation.

The Saviour also knew their "poverty." This church must have been poor beyond the rest of the Asian churches, for it is the only one of which poverty is predicated. And although no reason for their poverty is assigned, it is probable that it can be traced to the persecutions through which they were passing. When the civil authorities and the wealthy and influential part of a community are arrayed against the Christians, they are not able to acquire property or to retain it after it is acquired. They can neither obtain employment nor engage in trade; and through fines and imprisonments, and the scattering of their families, what little they have

will soon disappear. Whether this was the immediate cause of the poverty of the church in Smyrna or not, it is certain it was poor. And this was not an uncommon characteristic of the early Christians, and in fact of Christians of all ages. But though it was poor, it is the only one of the seven churches which has survived, and therefore its poverty may not, after all, have been a disadvantage.

Notwithstanding this poverty, Smyrna was "rich," not, however, in this world's goods, but in the grace and favor of God. These things are often united. There is nothing in poverty unfavorable to piety; but the Scriptures often contrast worldly wealth with spiritual riches in such a way as to show that both will not likely be enjoyed at the same time. "Ye can not serve God and mammon." "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." "Hearken, my beloved brethren; hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to them that love him?"

The Saviour also knew the "blasphemy" of those whose misrepresentations helped on the tribulation and poverty of the church in Smyrna. As a general thing, in the days of the apostles, and during the following century, the persecutions against the church were stirred up by the Jews. In proof of this I need only refer to the Acts of the Apostles. Nearly every disturbance began in the synagogue, and was brought to the notice of the civil authorities by the zealous Jews. And this is what we might expect. The new religion had not yet made much impression upon the Pagan religions of Rome, and the government of Rome did not feel called upon to array itself against Christianity. But this new religion was even then making great inroads in the synagogue. Many of the more devout Jews were led to believe on Jesus; and their unconverted brethren, filled with jealousy and national pride, were very diligent and bitter against the Christian church. There were such Jews in Smyrna; they claimed to belong to the only true church; they prided themselves on their descent from Abraham; but they were not true Jews; their conduct showed that they had not the spirit of the Jewish religion, and that they were not shaping their lives according to the teachings of the Jewish church. If they had been true Jews, they would have examined the claims of Christianity with candor, and recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. Therefore, though they did belong to the Jewish nation, they were not true Israelites; they belonged rather to the synagogue of Satan. They worshiped him, they served him, they associated with his servants. These false Jews were guilty of blasphemy. They heaped reproaches and revilings upon the people of God; they accused them falsely; they spake all manner of evil against them for the Saviour's sake. In so doing, they

were guilty of blasphemy against God, for God has said that he and his people are one.

This was what the Saviour knew of the church in Smyrna. He knew its tribulation, its poverty, and the blasphemy of the Jews. He also knew that those who were in such a case as this needed to be strengthened and encouraged by faithful exhortation, and this faithful *exhortation* is the second part of his message. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." He did not conceal from his faithful ones what they would have to suffer for his name's sake. This he never does. He does not entice men into his service by assuring them that they will find all things easy and pleasant. He tells them of the crosses they will have to bear; of the labors they will have to perform; of the temptations they will have to meet. And thus he did to the members of the church in Smyrna. He exhorts them not to be afraid, but at the same time he assures them that there were many things they would have to suffer. Among other things, they would be cast into prison. And though their imprisonment would be brought about by the hands of men, the Saviour traces it to its true source. The devil would cause them to be imprisoned. He would so influence those who belonged to his synagogue, that they would carry out his will in this regard. And it is right enough to say, that is done by Satan which is done by his agents. The design of this imprisonment was to try the faith of the saints. The Saviour permitted trials to come upon his saints that the reality of their religion might appear. He permitted them to be trodden under foot that their sweet odor might go forth through all the world.

The members of the church in Smyrna were not only to be imprisoned, they were also to have other tribulation ten days; that is, they were to have great and long continued tribulation. We use the words "ten" and "ten-fold" to indicate a large though indefinite quantity; and in this sense the word is used in the passage we are now considering. The best commentary on this verse is to be found on the pages of early ecclesiastical history. We read that in the year 167, less than 100 years after this epistle was written, the Christians of Asia suffered from violent persecutions. At this time the angel or pastor of the church in Smyrna was the aged Polycarp, whose name is known and loved through Christendom. In his youth he had been a disciple of John, and he seems to have resembled his teacher in love, gentleness and purity. When the persecutions broke out, Polycarp was a marked man. Though his first desire was to remain at his post, yet feeling the force of the Saviour's injunction, "when persecuted in one city flee to another," and yielding to the entreaties of his congregation, he sought one hiding place after another. At last his place

of retreat was discovered, we are told, by the evidence of a little child who was forced by torture to reveal what he knew. The aged disciple came down from the upper story of the house in which he had been hiding, gave himself up to his captors, and asked from them this favor, that he might have one hour of prayer. And though the fullness of his godly heart kept him kneeling for two hours at the mercy seat, the heathen soldiers were so impressed by the old man's earnestness that they would not disturb him. After his prayer was ended, he was taken back to the city of Smyrna and placed on trial before the Roman magistrate. This magistrate, who seems to have been a humane man, was inclined to deal gently with his aged prisoner. He asked him, "What harm can it be for you to offer sacrifice to the emperor"? But when Polycarp stoutly refused to be guilty of any such idolatry, the magistrate lost his patience and cried: "Curse Christ and I will set thee free." The old man answered in words which are familiar to the Christian church: "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he has never done me wrong; how then can I grieve him"? After many indignities, which he bore meekly and bravely, he was condemned to be burned alive. Then the Jews who belonged to the synagogue of Satan, ran with all their accustomed eagerness to collect fuel for the funeral pile. The old man laid aside his own garments and took his place in the midst of the faggots. When his executioners would have bound him to the stake, he said, "leave me, I pray you, thus unfastened; he who has enabled me to brave the fire will give me strength also to endure its fierceness." Then he uttered this brief prayer: "O Lord, Almighty God, the Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received a knowledge of thee; God of the angels and of the whole creation, of the whole race of men and of the saints who live before thy presence; I thank thee that thou hast thought me worthy this day and this hour to share the cup of thy Christ among the number of thy witnesses." And then the torch was applied, and in a little while Polycarp, the angel of the church in Smyrna, having been faithful unto death, received the crown of life.

This is but one example out of many. In those days the church of Smyrna was baptized with blood. As the Saviour knew that these persecutions were coming, how appropriate is his exhortation, "be thou faithful unto death"; and how cheering his promise, "I will give thee a crown of life." This future crown is ever the same, though it is called by various names. James calls it, as the Saviour calls it in this verse, "the crown of life"; Paul calls it "the crown of righteousness"; Peter calls it "the crown of glory"; Isaiah calls it "the crown of beauty." This promise may well strengthen the saints to witness a good confession, notwithstanding all the tribulations and persecutions which the synagogue of Satan may bring against them. To reach this crown of life, we need not of necessity

pass through sunless dungeons and scorching fires and the tortures of the sword. He who is faithful unto death, no matter in what form death comes; he who patiently bears whatever trials the Master requires him to bear, will receive the reward, for the golden crown must ever follow the faithful life.

IV. We may pass over the fourth part of the epistle without a single remark, for it is the same SOLEMN CALL TO ATTENTION and obedience, which was considered in the epistle to the Ephesian church. "He that hath an ear, let him hear."

V. THE BEAUTIFUL PROMISE to the final victor is, "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The members of the church in Smyrna were surrounded by the same enemies which have surrounded the saints in all ages. Prominent among these enemies are Satan, the fallen angels, wicked men, the world with its allurements, and the remaining corruption of our own hearts. It is no easy matter to wrestle with these principalities and powers, but there is a blessed promise for our encouragement, for he that overcomes these enemies will not be hurt of the second death.

We know, from our own observation, what the first death is. It is the end of our present earthly life. It is the severing of the ties which bind body and spirit together, so that the body returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit goes to God who gave it. There are few who do not regard the first death as the king of terrors, and fear his approach. But as there is a life beyond this present, for the faithful; so there is a death, which is beyond that death which has come under our observation, for the wicked. This other death, which is nothing else than the eternal punishment of the ungodly, is the death which is referred to in the text. Over him that overcometh, this second death will have no power. He will live forever, without fear of everlasting punishment.

We are surrounded by the same enemies which surrounded the Christians of Smyrna. It is true these enemies do not manifest their enmity in the same way, for imprisonments, and persecutions, and bloodshed for the sake of Christ are suspended, if they have not come to a full end. Still these enemies are full of hatred and power, and we cannot hope to be victors over them without a terrible struggle. But to every one who has ears to hear, to every victor in this struggle, this promise is given: "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Our religion does not promise exemption from the first death. Such a promise is certainly within the power of God. He could remove all his redeemed to heaven as he removed Enoch and Elijah, but for some good reason he does not. May we not see one reason in this, that the glories of heaven may, by contrast, be enhanced to those who enter it through the darkness and

dust of death? But better than any promise of exemption from the first death, is the promise of exemption from the second death. All we need to make the trials of life endurable is the assurance, that when our earthly life is ended, there is nothing to hurt or harm beyond. Let us, then, take this promise for our battle-cry in the conflict of life, "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death"!

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## LECTURE VI.

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### THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—REV. 2:12-17.

THE analysis of the epistle to the church in Pergamos is the same as that of the epistles we have already considered.

I. There is nothing in THE COMMAND to write this epistle, which requires explanation, save the location and characteristics of the city of Pergamos. "Unto the angel," that is, the pastor, "of the church in Pergamos write." Pergamos was situated a little more than fifty miles north of Smyrna, and about a hundred miles north of Ephesus. It was a commercial city, for though it was not directly on the Egean coast, it was located on the banks of the river Caicus, only a few miles from its mouth. Up until about two hundred years before this epistle was written it had been the capital of Asia. The kings of the Attalic dynasty, as it is called, had made it their royal residence, and had lavished their immense wealth upon it with an unstinted hand. After they had bequeathed it to the Romans, its old time splendor was not dimmed for many years. This city was celebrated not only for its splendor, but also for its library and its learning. Its library contained two hundred thousand volumes, an immense collection for those days. By its devotion to literature, this city has inscribed its name upon the very structure of our own language. The king of Egypt would not

permit the exportation of the papyrus plant, which was then used for writing, as we use paper, and from which our word "paper" is derived; and the philosophers of Pergamos were under the necessity of providing a substitute. This they did by preparing sheep skins and goat skins in a peculiar way, and on these they were accustomed to write their books. The preparation of these skins was brought to perfection in Pergamos, and from this circumstance they were called "Pergamana Charta," a name which has been contracted and modified by passing through various languages until it stands in our tongue, parchment; that is, the paper of Pergamos, a name which will forever commemorate the zeal of the inhabitants of Pergamos in the pursuits of literature. But Pergamos was especially celebrated for its idolatry. It was filled with heathen temples, and in some of them a worship was conducted whose licentiousness was too repulsive for description, or even allusion. Jupiter, and Athene, and Apollo, and Venus had temples here, but the most famous of them all was a temple which had been erected for the worship of *Æsculapius*, the founder and father of medical science, the ruins of which still remain. This gross idolatry and lasciviousness must be borne in mind, or we will not be able to understand the praise which the Saviour bestows upon the church which maintained, in a measure, its integrity in the city of Pergamos.

II. THE TITLE by which the Saviour here reveals himself is, "these things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." This title, like the titles which stand at the beginning of the other epistles, is quoted from the introductory vision of chapter I. In that vision John had seen one "out of whose mouth went a sharp two-edged sword"; an expression equivalent to this: "the word which proceeded out of his mouth was like a sharp two-edged sword." The word of the Lord is well compared to a sword. It goes forth to smite, to punish and to slay. By his word kings are brought down to the dust, his enemies are overwhelmed with shame and confusion, and the wicked are cast into hell with the nations that forget God. And this title is especially appropriate to the case in hand. The Saviour was about to rebuke sharply the members of the church in Pergamos; he felt called upon to threaten them with his sore displeasure; and to give this threatening its full force, it was well to remind them that he still held in his hands the sharp sword with two edges, which had been such a terrible instrument of punishment to the church and the world, and whose edge was still unblunted, for the destruction of the ungodly in all time to come.

III. THE SAVIOUR'S ACTUAL MESSAGE to the Pergamene church is three-fold.

1. In this epistle, as in the others, we have a *statement of what the Sa-*



*viour knew* about the church in Pergamos. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." The introductory formula, "I know thy works," common to all the epistles, may be passed over without a single remark. What particular "works" he knew, the Saviour proceeds to specify. He knew their dwelling place and surroundings. "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." Why Pergamos, rather than any other of the seven cities, is called Satan's seat or throne, is a question which is not easy to answer. But a reasonable answer can be discovered in some remarks which have already been made. We know that the worship of some heathen gods and goddesses was ten-fold more vile and degrading than that of others, that those cities in which the vilest of the deities were worshiped, were far more corrupt in their morals and practices than others. No one can read the history of pagan Greece, or even the epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, without being convinced that Corinth was such a city. And from what history has told us, as well as from what is contained in this brief epistle, we must believe that Pergamos was such a city. The worship in the temples of Venus and Æsculapius had gone to the extreme verge of indecency and blasphemy. The morals of the people were corrupt. Satan ruled over them with unquestioned authority. So absolute was his power, and so extensive his sway, that Pergamos was appropriately called his seat. Such was the city in which the Christians of Pergamos lived, and the Saviour knew its character. He knew the temptations to which they were exposed, the dangers by which they were surrounded, and the allurements which beckoned to them from every side. A knowledge of these things is necessary to impartial judgment. It will help us to judge of men's characters, to know where they live and their circumstances. It is far easier to be virtuous and pious in some places than in others, and at some times than at others. Before we can justly praise men for their virtues or blame them for their faults, we must know their temptations, their weaknesses and their surroundings. Because we do not know these things, we often bestow praise and blame where they are not deserved. But the Saviour knows, and therefore he can render to every man according to his works.

The Saviour also knew the faithfulness of the members of the church in Pergamos. "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." In scripture language, the name of any person is that by which he is made known. The name of Christ would therefore be that by which he is made known; that is, the gospel. These Christians in this unholy city had held fast to the gospel. They had not been ashamed of the name of Christ or of their faith in Christ. No matter what temptations surrounded them, or

what persecutions threatened them, they held fast to the one and would not deny the other; and without doubt these temptations and persecutions were hard to bear. They lived in the "days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth." Of this Antipas we know nothing, save what is recorded in these few words. From these words we know that he was a distinguished saint in that church, and that he had been called to seal his testimony with his blood. Whether he was only one martyr in the midst of a great cloud of witnesses in some general persecution, or whether he was the solitary victim in some local outbreak, as Stephen was, we do not know; but we know that he was counted worthy to share the cup of suffering with Christ, and to have his name written on the pages of the word of God and in the Lamb's book of life. But though there had been persecution in Pergamos which might have excused a wavering faith, the Christians there had held fast the Christian name and had not denied the Christian faith.

All this the Saviour knew; and in stating what he knew, he indirectly but plainly praises the members of that church. Their lot had been cast in a wicked city, where Satan sat enthroned; they had lived in a time when persecutions and bloodshed had tried their faith and tested their constancy; but their faith and constancy had not failed. While their steadfastness would have been praiseworthy in any circumstances, it was especially praiseworthy in the circumstances in which they had been placed. Therefore the Saviour, who is just in all his ways, praises them. Let us do honor to the faithful ones of Pergamos, and let us strive after a like honor, ever remembering that they who are tempted and yet victorious, who are tried and yet faithful, who are in danger and yet brave, are the ones whom the Saviour writes on the palms of his hands.

2. The next thing in the Saviour's message is a *sharp rebuke*. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." The church in Pergamos tolerated certain persons who taught error and who practiced immorality. With such they should of course have held no fellowship. They should have exercised discipline upon them, and if they could not bring them to repentance in this way, they should have cut them off from all connection with the holy church of God. But instead of this they recognized them as members of the church and their brethren in the Lord. They associated with them, and thus brought their own integrity into jeopardy every hour. The Saviour knew this, and for this he rebuked them. This was what he had against the church in Pergamos.

These false teachers and evil doers are here described as those "that

hold the doctrine of Balaam." This does not mean that they formed a distinct sect, calling themselves Balaamites; it does not mean that they openly taught what Balaam taught; it means that their doctrines and practices were substantially the same as those of the false prophet, and that they deserved to be placed in the same class with him. What the peculiar doctrines and practices of Balaam were, we may learn from a reference to Old Testament history. When the children of Israel, in their journey through the wilderness, were approaching Moab, Balak, the king of that country, was sore afraid. He sent for Balaam, who seems to have mingled sorcery with some knowledge of the true God, to come and curse Israel, in the hope that under the influence of that curse his armies might obtain a victory over the hosts which Moses was leading. Balaam coveted the great reward which the king of Moab promised, and after repeated intercession he obtained the permission of God to go with the messengers, but only on the condition that he should speak what the Lord told him to speak. You remember how, on one hilltop after another, and beside one altar after another, he tried his best to curse Israel, but every trial proved a failure. Words of present blessing and of future greatness fell from his lips; words, whose eloquence are not surpassed in sacred or profane literature. Balak was naturally displeased with his hired prophet, and he sent him home in disgrace. But Balaam was determined to possess himself of the magnificent reward which the king of Moab had promised, and he set himself at work to devise a more successful plan. The Moabites, in accordance with his advice, sent their most beautiful women to the neighborhood of the camp of Israel, and the Israelites were captivated by the daughters of Moab. But these women, instructed by those who had sent them out, would not yield to the solicitations of the men of Israel until the men of Israel had promised to offer sacrifices to the idols of Moab. By this idol worship, and by these unholy matrimonial alliances, the anger of the Lord was kindled, and he sent a plague upon the people, in which twenty-four thousand died an untimely death. Thus far the plan of Balaam had worked well. If it had worked on as he expected it to do, Israel would soon have become so weak that it would have fallen an easy prey to Moab. But Israel repented; the plague was stayed; the armies of the Lord went forth against the armies of Moab and utterly defeated them; and Balaam himself was slain with the sword. I have not time to refer to all the passages, scattered through several chapters of Old Testament history, which prove the truth of these statements. I will quote a single passage, which contains the substance of what I have said. When the children of Israel returned from the conquest of Moab, they brought back some of the women of Moab as captives. Moses, who had gone out to meet them on their return, commanded these captive women to be put to death at once, saying, "behold, these caused the children of Israel, through

the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." Num. 31 : 16.

These facts are in perfect harmony with what is contained in the verse we are now considering. Balaam laid a stumbling-block in the way of the Israelites, over which they fell. Through his instruction they were involved in sin, they were led to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Those who taught similar doctrines and introduced similar practices into the Christian church, are called followers of Balaam. Peter says of such, "they follow the way of Balaam the son of Bozor"; Jude says of such, "they run greedily after the error of Balaam." Such men were to be found in the church of Pergamos, for the Saviour says, "so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." As has been said, the Nicolaitanes were the same as the followers of Balaam. This may be inferred from the verse we are now considering, in which it is implied that the influence of Balaam over Balak was similar to that which was exerted by the Nicolaitanes over the church of Pergamos. This may also be inferred from the names by which they are called, for Balaam and Nicolas mean the same thing, viz., "a destroyer of the people." This may also be inferred from what is told us in the revelation and in early ecclesiastical history of the doctrines which they held. What were these doctrines? Manifestly that it was not a sin to eat things sacrificed to idols or to commit fornication. It may seem strange that such doctrines were ever taught by persons connected with the church of Christ, but the fact cannot be denied. The moral sensibilities of the Gentiles were blunted by long indulgence in vice, and they could not see its vileness as men of purer lives could do. Some Gentile converts talked loudly of the liberty of Christ, and used that liberty "for an occasion to the flesh"; "they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness"; "they continued in sin that grace might abound"; they maintained that Christians were free to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to engage in the festivities of sacrificial feasts, with which licentiousness was almost inseparably connected. It was the presence of such men in the church, which called forth the decree of the council in Jerusalem, which reads, "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." Acts 15 : 28, 29. It was the presence of such men in the church of Pergamos, which called forth the stern rebuke we are now considering. And surely this rebuke was deserved, for they who extend Christian sympathy and fellowship to those who teach and practice such things, are not doing honor to the church which God has purchased with his own blood.

3. The next thing in the Saviour's message is a  *fearful threatening*.

"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." The Saviour may visit a church in mercy, or he may visit it in wrath. It is of the latter visitation he here speaks. No church can retain notorious sinners in its membership and be guiltless. But the Saviour's wrath would be especially directed against the followers of Balaam. Against them he would fight with the sword of his mouth, that is, the command would go forth out of his mouth, and in obedience to that command judgments would cut them off. In what form these judgments would come, he does not say. It might be in the form of persecution, or famine, or pestilence. When the judgments came, though the Nicolaitanes would suffer most, the true members of the church would also suffer, for in such a trial both the gold and the dross are cast into the furnace, though the latter only is consumed. The only way by which they could escape from this visitation was by the door of repentance; and this is the only door by which any of us can hope to escape; for to all those who are sinners, or who are bidding sinners God-speed, the Saviour is ever saying, "repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly."

IV. THE SOLEMN CALL TO ATTENTION and obedience does not differ from the one which has been considered in the former epistles. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

V. THE PROMISE to the final victor is, "to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." You remember the event in Jewish history to which reference is made, viz., the feeding of the Jews with manna in the wilderness. You remember, also, the pot of manna which was hidden for a memorial in the most holy place of the temple. There is here an allusion to this pot of manna. But what was symbolized by it? Every one who has read the Gospels must answer; it is the Lord Jesus who is represented, and who represents himself as the bread which cometh down from heaven. He is now hidden in heaven, far beyond the reach of the human eye and the search of the human mind; but they that overcome those spiritual enemies, common to the saints of Pergamos and to the saints in all the ages, will find him, and partaking of the fullness which is treasured up in him, will live forever.

These victors will also receive a "white stone"; that is, a glittering gem. The high priest of the Jewish economy had a breast plate, which sparkled with jewels. The allusion may be to this; or, it may be to the fact that kings often gave a signet ring to the man whom they delighted to honor. In either case the meaning is the same. The victor is to be both a priest

and a king; he will have the apparel of a priest, and the ring of a king. And on this white stone, there would be a new name, which the Christian wearer had won for himself in the conflicts of life, and which would contain in it a reference to the battles he had fought, and the victories he had gained. This name would be a secret one, for his hardest battles, and his greatest victories, are known only to the Christian himself and to his God. Therefore, the name which commemorates these things, can be known only to him who receives it, and to the God who gives it. There must ever be a loneliness about the Christian life and experience, which is shadowed forth by the Saviour's treading the wine press alone, and which is expressed in the words, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joys." God grant this manna, and this stone, and this name, may be ours!

## LECTURE VII.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—REV. 2: 18-29.

IN this epistle, as in the ones we have already considered, there are five parts, viz., the Saviour's command, titles, message, promise and exhortation; though for some reason, which is not very clear, the exhortation follows the promise and does not precede it, as in the former epistles.

I. THE SAVIOUR'S COMMAND to write the epistle is: "And unto the angel" that is, the pastor, "of the church in Thyatira write." In our

excursion among the churches of Asia, we have thus far been traveling north. At Pergamos, we turn directly to the east and travel about thirty miles into the interior of Asia, to the city of Thyatira. This was never a large or famous city. Little is said of it on the pages of history. We know that it was a Macedonian colony. It is a slight but remarkable confirmation of the New Testament narrative, that on the occasion of Paul's first visit to Macedon, he met there one Lydia from the city of Thyatira. And this is just what we might have expected. Surely those who had emigrated from Macedon would, when their business and circumstances permitted it, return to visit their native land. There is another slight confirmation of the history which deserves a passing notice. A traveler who recently visited the village which stands on the site of the ancient city, tells us that in the gardens of the village, and on the plain on which the village stands, are raised large quantities of a kind of madder, whose root is now and has been for centuries extensively used in coloring red. And we are told of Lydia, whom Paul met in Macedon, that she was "a seller of purple." We do not know when or by whom the church of Thyatira was planted, but certainly there is a probability that this purple-seller had something to do with its establishment. She was a proselyte to the Jewish faith when Paul met her, for she was then a worshiper of God. And when she heard the gospel, "the Lord opened her heart that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul." It therefore gives me pleasure to believe that she who had gone forth to buy and sell, and get gain, returned to her home bringing richer merchandise than any she had hoped to obtain, and that she was instrumental in helping to establish a church, which grew until it was thought worthy to be numbered with the other churches of Asia.

II. We have THE TITLES by which the Saviour reveals himself to this church. "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." The speaker claims to be "the Son of God," a name which the Jews rightly understood as implying equality with the Father. The other titles which the Saviour claims for himself, have all been noticed and explained in the introductory vision of chapter I. His eyes were like "a flame of fire." Nothing, however hidden, whether in the world or in the human heart, could be concealed from them, and their fierce brightness would burn up everything that was offensive. His feet were like "fine brass," a figure which indicates the majesty and power with which he walks in the midst of his church. Under his stately stepplings all his people's enemies are ground to the dust.

These titles are not accidentally bestowed in this connection. They have a direct bearing upon the message which is about to be delivered. The Saviour was about to give a sharper rebuke than any he had yet given; he was

about to utter a more fearful threatening than any he had yet uttered; he was about to offer a more astonishing reward than any he had yet offered; and it was in the highest degree appropriate for him to remind the members of the church in Thyatira that he was the Son and equal of God, and that he had the right to rebuke, threaten, punish and reward; that his eyes of fire could not be deceived; and that the goings of his feet of burning brass could not be stayed. The deity, the omniscience and the omnipresence of the Saviour, and these are the things which are shadowed forth by the titles we are now considering, lead directly to the threatenings and the promises with which this epistle is filled. We can appreciate neither the fearfulness of the threatenings nor the blessedness of the promises, if we do not remember that the speaker is "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."

III. THE SAVIOUR'S ACTUAL MESSAGE is contained in verses 19-26. This message contains the usual declaration of knowledge; a sharp rebuke; a fearful threatening; and an earnest exhortation. Let us take up these parts in order.

1. We have the usual *declaration of knowledge*. "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first." The introductory formula, "I know thy works," requires no explanation. Let us hasten on to notice the particular "works" of the Thyatiran church, which the Saviour knew. He knew their "charity"; that is, their love to their fellow men, which manifested itself in kindly words and deeds, and their love to God, which manifested itself in affectionate worship and service. He also knew their "service." God does not call his people to idleness. They are his servants, and they have their work to do. They have to labor for their own sanctification, for the conversion of others, and for the glory of God. This is hard work, but it is well for them to remember, for their encouragement, that their works of faith and labors of love are all known and noted. He also knew the "faith" of his people in Thyatira. He knew that they trusted in him for salvation, and that they showed their trust by unwavering fidelity in his cause. He also knew their "patience" under all the persecutions and afflictions which had come upon them to try their faith, and to test their constancy. He also knew that they were making progress in their inward sanctification and in their outward Christian life; for it is now generally acknowledged that the last clause of the verse should read, "thy last works to be more than the first." He knew that their works, which he had just mentioned, were growing in number and greatness; he knew that their love, and service, and faith, and patience, were greater now than in the beginning of their Christian life. In one word, he knew they were making progress. This is an honorable commendation, which every soul and every church should



seek to gain. He whose last works are not greater than his first, who is not less selfish, and less proud, and less irritable, and more useful, and more diligent, and more self-denying than he was when he began the Christian pilgrimage, has reason to tremble for his safety, for he is not growing in grace.

2. The next thing in the Saviour's message is a *sharp rebuke*. "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." According to the best critics, the words, "a few things" should be stricken from the text, and it should read, "I have this against thee, that thou sufferest, &c." There is another remarkable variation in the reading here, which must not be passed over without an observation or two. Some of the ancient manuscripts and versions have the text as it is in our version; others have it "thy wife Jezebel." If this is the correct reading, it appears that the wife of the pastor of the church in Thyatira was a notoriously wicked woman, that she had used all her influence to corrupt the faith and morals of the church, and that her husband had not restrained her or cut her off by the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. But the general meaning of the passage is the same whichever reading is adopted, only in one case the notorious sinner was the wife of the pastor, and in the other case she was not.

The following things are clear: the name "Jezebel" describes a person, and not a class. It is true, in the preceding part of the chapter, the words "Nicolaitanes" and "Balaamites" are used to describe classes. If in this verse it had been said, "thou sufferest the Jezebelites," or "thou sufferest them that hold the doctrine of Jezebel," then we would of course have seen in the language a description of some class of men and women who resembled Jezebel. But by the language that is used, some particular individual is pointed out, and that particular individual is called Jezebel. It is also clear that this particular individual was a woman. The name, and all the circumstances mentioned, are decisive on this point. It is also clear that this woman was called Jezebel, not because this was her real name, but because she resembled the wicked wife of Ahab, who is one of the notorious characters of sacred history. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Tyre and Sidon, and of course devoted to the worship of the gods of these heathen cities. After her marriage with the weak Ahab, she exerted a controlling influence over him and over Israel. Before the reign of Ahab, the ten tribes had worshipped the two golden calves, but still God had received some worship and his law some honor. The wicked Jezebel introduced the worship of Ashteroth, a worship too impure, licentious and blasphemous to be described, and the Israelites were only too willing to imitate her example and worship her

gods. The New Testament Jezebel resembled her of the Old Testament. She claimed to be a prophetess, that is, a teacher. If she was the wife of the pastor of the church in Thyatira, as the old Jezebel was the wife of the king of Israel, we can readily see how she could establish her claims and multiply her influence. Like her Old Testament namesake, she taught the people of God to take part in sacrificial feasts, and in all the uncleanness which was inseparably connected with those feasts. It is, therefore, evident that she taught the same doctrines, and practiced the same immoralities which the Nicolaitanes and Balaamites taught and practiced, for the same words are used to describe her sin which are used to describe theirs. She seduced God's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, offenses which in those days seem to have been inseparable.

The leader in this error in the Thyatiran church was a woman, possibly the pastor's wife. Such a sin, on the part of such a person, was one of fearful aggravation; and yet God did not at once punish her. "I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." In some way God had warned her of her sin, and had threatened her with punishment, but she would not repent and turn from the sins which she loved. During all this trial of the divine patience, the pastor and office bearers of the church had suffered her to continue in her immoral practices, which showed that she was the very opposite of what her name signifies; for Jezebel, or Isabell, as the name stands in our language, means chaste. That they should suffer her thus to continue seems almost incredible, but they did. Does not this fact furnish additional confirmation to the supposition that she was the pastor's wife? For would so much forbearance have been exercised towards one who did not stand in intimate relationship with those whose duty it was to exercise discipline? No doubt they thought they had some excuse for their forbearance, but the Saviour thought otherwise, and he administered to them this sharp rebuke, which must have cut them to the heart.

3. The next part of the Saviour's message is *a fearful threatening*. "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." The sin of Jezebel and her followers was great, but their day of grace had not expired, though it was rapidly drawing to a close. If they would exercise repentance, which includes sorrow for the past and reformation in the future, they would obtain the favor and promise of God; but if not, he would turn their bed of adultery into a bed of sickness, and their sin into great tribulation. There is often a strange correspondence between sin and its punishment. Jacob deceived his father, and he was deceived by his children. David violated the sanctities of the family, and the sanctities of his family were violated. In our own day, lewdness is followed by languish-

ing and loathsomeness. So it would be with the vile adulterers of Thyatira. Their bed of pleasure would be turned into a bed of pain.

They would not only suffer pain, their pain would be unto death. "And I will kill her children with death." By what means they would be brought to death, is not expressly stated; but it seems to be implied that it would be through some disease which was the natural result of their sinful life, and a judgment upon it.

This judgment, in whatever form it would come, was designed not only for the punishment of Jezebel and her fellow sinners, but also for the instruction of all. "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." In scripture language, the reins are regarded as the seat of the passions, and the heart as the seat of the affections. Therefore, in the words we are now considering, the Saviour claims the attributes of God, in that he knows the secret passions and affections of men; and the punishments which he sends upon them, and which correspond sometimes in form, always in degree, with the sins for which they are sent, show that his claims are well founded. His judgments are the judgments of one who is omniscient as well as omnipotent.

This threatened judgment, when it came, would be nothing new under the sun; it would be in accordance with the principle announced here and in many other places in the inspired word. "I will give unto every one of you according to your works." This promise or threatening, for it may be either a promise to those who humbly strive to do the works of God, or a threatening to those who serve Satan, is not fully executed in this life, but it will be fulfilled to the very letter when all men will stand before the bar to be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

4. The next part of the Saviour's message is *an earnest exhortation*. "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." The first clause of verse 24 should read, "but I say unto you, even the remnant in Thyatira." Our translation conveys the idea that the persons who are here addressed are different persons from those who are called the remnant of Thyatira. This is not correct. This remnant is composed of those who are true members of the church. This is evident from the description which follows. They are described in the first place as those who "have not this doctrine"; that is, they had not been corrupted by the teaching and example of Jezebel. They are also described as those who "have not known the depths of Satan." The depths of Satan, what are they? They are the deep arts with which he beguiles men, and the deep sins into which he leads them. There were men in the church in the days of John, and there have been many since his day, who said it was a Christian duty to know the depths of Satan. They said, how can a man resist Satan unless he knows what Satan's wiles are? They

said that it was a small thing to despise pleasure and to live above it, if one ever fled from its presence. The true victory was to visit the place where sinners gathered, to feel the force of temptation, to indulge in sin, and yet to keep the upper hand of it; the true victory was to give the body to the lusts of the flesh, and yet maintain a mind above these things. Thus they prated about "the depths of Satan," as they called them, which it was their duty to fathom. Are there not such persons in our own day? If I mistake not, there are those who say, the right thing to do is not to abstain from intoxicating drinks, but while indulging in them to have full power over our own will; the right thing to do is not to keep away from the drinking saloon, the gambling hell, and the place of sinful amusement and doubtful propriety, but while visiting them and seeing and sharing their pleasures, to keep the mind uncontaminated; the right thing to do is not to avoid ungodly companions, but while associating with them and going where they go and doing what they do, to remain unharmed; the right thing to do is to know "the depths of Satan," but while knowing them to live above them. Such men preach an impossibility, for no man can take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned.

There were such men in Thyatira. They held the doctrines of Jezebel and maintained that it was their duty to know the depths of Satan. But there were others in Thyatira who did not hold this doctrine; who did not think it needful for them to know from experience what the depths of sin are; who did not think it necessary to go to this school of Satan to learn the full measure of evil; and who were content with the simple knowledge of the good. To them the Saviour addresses his words of exhortation. He would put upon them no other burden than the one they were already called to bear. They were still to abstain from and protest against the abominations by which they were surrounded. He would impose upon them no additional burden, on condition that they would hold fast what they had. Whatever of sound doctrine and holy living they had attained, they were to hold so firmly that no one could wrest it from them. This firm faithfulness was to continue till the Lord should come to receive them to himself. Then the long struggle against error and for truth would come to an end, and they would enter their reward.

IV. THE PROMISE to the final victor is contained in verses 26-28. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." Those who obtain the victory over their spiritual foes are to reign, but they reign only because Christ reigns, and they are united with him; they are to have power over the nations only because Christ, with whom they are united, is "King of

kings and Lord of lords"; they are to rule with a scepter of iron, which cannot be resisted or broken only because Christ, with whom they are united, is the omnipotent one. All this is evident, because the words which are quoted from Psalm 2, and which describe the submission and destruction of the church's enemies, were in the first instance spoken with reference to Christ. But Christ here applies them to his saints, thereby intimating that they have a part in his future triumph, and a share in his future glory. This is a blessing which it is the Saviour's to give, for he has received it of the Father. As he said to his own when he was here on earth, so he is saying to them yet, and so will he continue to say to them till his words have received their complete fulfillment, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father has appointed unto me."

The Saviour promises to give to his victorious ones not only a kingdom but also "the morning star." Can any one ask, what is meant by the morning star, when this same Saviour has said in the concluding words of this book, "I am the bright and morning star"? Jesus is himself the morning star. He therefore promises to give himself to his saints, to impart to them of his glory, and to share with them his royal dominion. What a sublime promise! The morning star which shines in our heavens is a near fore-runner of the approaching day; so he who receives the star of the celestial morning may know that he is about to enter the unclouded glory of the unending day.

V. Well then may the Saviour, for the encouragement of his tried and battling ones, conclude this epistle with THE USUAL CALL TO ATTENTION and obedience. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This call is for us. The members of the church of Thyatira are sleeping in their unknown graves; the city of Thyatira itself can hardly be found; but Jezebel has her followers yet; there is yet need of encouragement and faithfulness; the promise yet holds good. Then, for the sake of the glorious kingdom, for the sake of the morning star, and above all for the sake of him who promises even to us the kingdom and the star, let us hold fast that which we have already till he comes to receive us to himself.

## LECTURE VIII.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—REV. 3:1-6.

THE epistle to the church in Sardis is one of the saddest and sharpest of them all. In the other churches the Saviour finds a few things to condemn; in this church he finds only a few things to praise, for in Sardis there were only a few names which had not defiled their garments.

I. THE COMMAND TO WRITE this epistle is in these words: "and unto the angel of the church in Sardis write." The seven cities of Asia have already been described as located something in the form of a horse-shoe, with its toe turned towards the north. From Patmos to Ephesus, from Ephesus to Smyrna, and from Smyrna to Pergamos, we followed the west side of the shoe; from Pergamos to Thyatira, we followed the crown; and now we begin our return on the east side, for Sardis was about forty miles south of Thyatira.

Sardis was one of the famous cities of antiquity. Though this is the only connection in which its name is mentioned in the Scriptures, page after page of profane history is occupied with the story of its riches and its beauty, its defeats and its victories. It was the chief city of Lydia, one of the provinces of Asia. It was situated on the banks of the river Pactolus, famed in ancient story for the golden sands which its waters washed down from the mountains beyond. It was the capital of the kingdom of Croesus, whose wealth, gathered in part from the gold-washings of the river which flowed by his city, was so great that "as rich as Croesus" has been a proverb in all the ages. It might be interesting to recall some of the incidents in the life of this distinguished man; to tell of the famous reply of the heathen oracle, "when thou crossest thy boundary, thou shalt destroy a kingdom"; a reply which led him to make war with the Persians and to lose his own throne; to tell of his interview with Solon, during which that great philosopher warned him of the instability of riches; to

tell how the remembrance of that interview and the repetition of the name of Solon saved his life when Cyrus, his conqueror, was about to put him to death. But as these incidents, and many others which might be gathered up from history, would throw no light on the passage which we are now considering, it would be a waste of time to dwell upon them. Let this only be borne in mind. The inhabitants of Sardis, we are told, were held in ill repute, even among the ancients, for their voluptuous habits of life. This must be remembered, or we will not appreciate the full force of the words, "thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." It will give emphasis and pathos to the threatenings of this epistle, to remember that a few miserable huts and acres of crumbling ruins are all that now remain of that city whose beauty was so great that even the riches of Croesus could not make it more beautiful.

II. Let us now notice **THE TITLES** by which the Saviour reveals himself to the church of Sardis. "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." These titles are not new to us; we have already heard them and tried to apprehend their meaning. The Holy Ghost is here called "the seven Spirits of God" to indicate the perfection of his manifold operations, for seven is the symbol of perfection. Christ is said to have the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ and proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. This is in accordance with what the Saviour says in his farewell address to his disciples: "when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." Therefore, it can be said that the Spirit is sent to do Christ's will, just as it is said that Christ was sent to do the Father's will.

The Saviour has also "the seven stars," and the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; that is, still remembering that seven is the number of perfection, the seven stars are Christian ministers in all the diversified and perfect work which their Master has given them to do. The Saviour holds all ministers in his hands. They are his; his to do what he bids, to go where he sends, to speak what he commands. It is well for them, and for all who are engaged in teaching in any department of the church, to remember this, for this thought will be to every one of them a warning and an encouragement.

These titles were selected by omniscience with special reference to the circumstances of the church in Sardis. That church was growing cold and lifeless. The flickering lamps of their piety were dimly burning. It was well to remind them that their Saviour held in his hand the Holy Ghost, who is the great source of all spiritual influences, and the ministers of the word, who are the great instruments by which these spiritual influences are brought to bear on men. If they wished their souls to be revived, and

the lamps of their piety to shine with renewed brightness, they must seek the desired blessing alone from him who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.

III. THE SAVIOUR'S MESSAGE to the church of Sardis is contained in verses 1-4. This message consists of four parts, viz., the usual declaration of knowledge, an exhortation, a threatening, and a word of praise.

1. We have the usual *declaration of knowledge*. The first clause of this declaration, "I know thy works," is explained in the second clause, "that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." By a very common figure of Scripture, death denotes a state of sin; as for example when Paul says, "and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." By another closely related figure, life denotes the state of a regenerated and saved soul. The meaning, then, of the words under consideration is this: the members of the church in Sardis professed to be Christians, but they were in a state of sin, they were not Christians, their profession was but a name. Of course this description does not apply to all the members of that church, for there were some who had not defiled their garments. And if I mistake not, these words mean something more than that they had made a profession of religion, while they were in a state of unbelief. They mean that the members of the church in Sardis had a name and reputation for piety through all that region of country; they were celebrated as a model church; men pointed to them as an example in the management of their church affairs, and in all the externals of their religion; and yet all the time they were dead in trespasses and sins. Are there no such model churches in the days in which we live? Are there no churches which devote their time and attention to those things which will make a show before the world, and, while their praise is in every one's mouth, are lifeless? A condition more sad could not be described. Better be dead and know it, than be a ghastly skeleton clothed with the semblance of life! If there are any of us who have reason to suspect that this is our state in the sight of God, let us enter with diligence upon the work of self-examination, for it is not a reputation for piety, but a living and saving faith, which is the unfailing characteristic of the people of God.

2. The Saviour's message to the church of Sardis contains an *earnest exhortation*. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." The first part of the exhortation has reference to that watchfulness which is so often enjoined upon the soldier of the cross. His enemies are numerous and powerful, and he has to watch their plans. His own weakness is great, and he has to watch his infirmities. His duties are many, and he has to watch the time and place in which they should be



performed. But watchfulness was especially necessary for those who, like the church of Sardis, had fallen into a state of moral death. To all such, the Saviour's command is, "awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

A second part of the exhortation is, "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." The members of that church still possessed some languishing graces, which seemed just ready to perish; and it was their duty to cultivate and cherish these graces, and to inspire them with new and vigorous life. The garden of the soul is filled with tender plants. Even when they are in the most flourishing condition, a rude blast will cause them to wither and fade; but when they are the reverse of flourishing, when they are ready to die, they require most tender care.

A reason is assigned why this watching and strengthening were necessary, viz., "for I have not found thy works perfect before God." The word which is here translated "perfect" is not the one which is usually translated by this term; it literally means complete or full. Their works had not reached the full standard of what was expected of them; they had come short of what was required at their hands; they may have thought themselves diligent in every good word and work; and their words and works may have seemed complete to their fellow men; but they were not complete before God. Of what Christian, of what church, of what community is not this true? Whom may not the Saviour reproach with this very language?

The third part of the Saviour's exhortation is, "remember therefore how thou hast received and heard." When they first heard the gospel their hearts were filled with joy, and they heard it with gladness; they thought they could not do too much for the gospel or love their Saviour too well; but these times of delight, "when first they found the Lord," had passed away. They now refused to hear the word, or heard it with coldness. The Saviour exhorts them to look back to the days when they gave themselves to Christ, and to remember the joy they then found in the way of duty. It is always well for Christians to call to mind the days of their espousals, when their souls were filled with all the love of the new convert; for such an exercise, if blessed of God, will lead them to do again their first works.

The fourth part of the Saviour's exhortation is, "hold fast." It was their duty to remember the truths which they had received in the early part of their Christian life, and to hold them with a firmness which could not be shaken.

The fifth part of the Saviour's exhortation is, "repent." It was their duty to sorrow over their departure from their first love and from the first truths they had received; to make again their former attainments; and to press forward to still greater ones. All this is included in evangelical repentance.

3. The Saviour's message to the church of Sardis contains *a fearful*

*threatening.* "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." When Christ was here on earth he twice compared his coming to the coming of a thief. This figure seems to have taken a strong hold on the minds of the early Christians. Paul uses it to describe the same event; so does Peter; so does John. And this figure does describe, in a most impressive manner, the suddenness of the Saviour's coming in his judgments. Even those who were not enlightened by the gospel knew that the judgments of heaven could not be foreseen. The Greeks had a proverb that the feet of the avenging deities were shod with wool; and this proverb expresses the universal experience of the race. The adverse providences of God approach our hearts and homes with a noiseless step, and they may be near at hand when we think they are far off. Christ has often come to inflict deserved punishment on the ungodly, and these comings of his have generally been as unexpected as the coming of a thief in the night. So it was with the fiery rain by which the cities of the plain were blotted out of existence; so it was with the ruin which came upon the deluded inhabitants of Jerusalem; so it was with the deluge, for men were eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage, until the flood came and swept them all away; so it will be in that great day of judgment which is to come upon all the world; in such an hour as men think not the Son of man will come; so it was to be in the church of Sardis in case its members did not repent. While they were dreaming in fancied security the Saviour would come as a thief in the night, and before they were aware of it, their spiritual treasures would be taken away. How many have been thus visited and in a moment have been reduced to endless poverty!

4. The Saviour's message to the church of Sardis contains a *small measure of praise*. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." There is this difference between the church of Sardis and the churches whose condition we have considered: against each one of them the Saviour had some special fault to find. One had left its first love; another retained in its communion the followers of Balaam; another tolerated Jezebel and her disciples; but against this church the Saviour mentions nothing special. There was a general decline. One point of faith and practice was as weak and as worthy of blame as another. But even in a church in which there was such a general decline of piety, even in the city of Sardis, which was notorious for its voluptuousness, there were a few persons who had not defiled their garments. The garments here spoken of are not the white raiment spoken of in the next verse; they are not the linen robes, clean and white, which are spoken of elsewhere in this book. The latter refer to the apparel of the saints in glory; the former to the apparel of the saints on the earth, the garments of a true Christian

profession. There are many ways in which such garments may be defiled. The apostle James speaks of the defilement which comes from the world; "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Jude speaks of the defilement which comes from the flesh; "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." The robes of our profession are liable to more frequent and filthy defilement from the flesh than from the world. The lusts of the flesh are so mingled with amiable impulses, they have so many plausible excuses, they are always carried about with us, they enter places from which the world is easily shut out. They go with the hermit into the desert, with the monk into his cell, with the Christian into his retirement, that the wonder is that garments spotted by the flesh are not more numerous than they are.

In Sardis there were a few saints whose garments were white, and whose hearts were pure. They must sometimes have fallen into sin, for no saint is sinless, but when their garments become spotted, they washed them again in the blood of the Lamb. On this account the Saviour praises them. For their encouragement he assures them that in the future world they would walk in white; their undefiled garments would be changed into white robes, which no impurity could adhere to or stain. And they were not only to be clothed in white, they were also to "walk," a word which indicates their freedom and untiring activity. And they were to walk with the Saviour himself, and enjoy unending communion with him. This privilege was to be theirs, "for they were worthy." But worthiness must be regarded as relative and not as absolute. It is founded, not on perfect obedience, but on faith. They are worthy by the law of free grace, though they are not worthy by the law of justice.

IV. THE SAVIOUR'S PROMISE to the final victor is contained in verse 5. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." Let it be remembered that this promise is not alone for the members of the church of Sardis, but for all those who have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The enemies by whom we are surrounded, and the conflict which must precede our final victory, need not again be described. I will notice only the victors' three-fold reward.

1. He that overcometh "shall be clothed in white raiment." White is the emblem of innocence, and therefore it is the color of heaven. The Saviour and all the great multitude which he is leading to glory are represented as wearing shining robes of purest white. Those who have kept their garments unspotted while they walked in the midst of the unnumbered defilements of the present life, will have still brighter garments

given to them in the world to come. They will have all the holiness, and all the peace, and all the honor, which are shadowed forth by their peculiar raiment. Happy are they whose unspotted robes on earth give unfailing promise of the white raiment of heaven.

2. The victors are not only to wear the robes of victory, their names are to stand forever in "the book of life." Heaven is here compared to a city, in which the most perfect order reigns. The names of all its citizens are written in a book of record, which is here and elsewhere called the "book of life," for those whose names are written therein are heirs of life, and of all the blessings of the celestial city. In one place this book is called "the Lamb's book of life." The names which are written therein can never be erased. The book is in the keeping of the Almighty one, and no one is able to pluck it out of his hand. Those whose names are written therein will never be forgotten, for their names are written in the blood of the great sacrifice. Happy are they whose faith gives assurance that they are enrolled among the citizens of the city of God.

3. In addition to all this, the victors are to be openly acknowledged by their Saviour in the presence of God and of the holy angels. While they are here on earth, he is not ashamed to call them brethren, neither will he be ashamed to call them brethren when they stand by his side before the bar of the Heavenly Father. Happy are they, whose confession of Christ before men gives evidence that they will be confessed before the assembled universe.

V. We have THE USUAL CALL TO ATTENTION and obedience, which is addressed to us as well as to the seven churches of Asia. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Let me say a concluding word to those of us who have a name to live. We have made a public profession of faith. It may be that we regard ourselves, and that others regard us, as model Christians and a model church; we may flatter ourselves that we are walking in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless; and yet it may be that we are dead. How can we determine whether we have spiritual life? Just as we determine whether we have bodily life. Is the soul in exercise? Is it seeking God and communing with God, and praying to God, and doing the works of God? Tried by this test, how many of us are alive, though we have a name to live? How many of us are dead! All such should hear and heed the words, "awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die."

## LECTURE IX.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—REV. 3: 7-13.

I. In the epistle to the church in Philadelphia, we have, in the first place, **THE SAVIOUR'S COMMAND TO WRITE** this epistle. "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write." The only thing here which requires attention at our hands, is the location and history of Philadelphia. This city was situated about forty miles south-east of Sardis. In our excursion among the churches of Asia, we are now on our return journey towards Patmos, the place of beginning. It was the second place in importance in the province of Lydia, and the great wine market for all that region of country. It was so often shaken with earthquakes, that a Greek historian calls it "the city of many earthquakes"; a fact which gives peculiar emphasis and appropriateness to the concluding promise that the members of the Philadelphia church would, in the world to come, be made pillars in a glorious temple, which could never be shaken or destroyed. Though this city had a large population, it does not occupy a distinguished place in history. With the exception of its earthquakes and its wines, and from what we can learn the latter seem to have been as fatal to its prosperity as the former, there was nothing to lift it into prominence. It received its name from Philadelphia, by whom it was builded. It is still a place of considerable size when compared with the other interior towns of Asia Minor, containing about three thousand houses, and some ten or twelve churches, but with not enough Christians, and they of a doubtful reputation, to fill one-fourth of these places of worship.

Permit me to read a few sentences from Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," which describe in graphic words the present condition of the once famous cities of Asia, and especially that of Philadelphia. And while you will perceive the manifest ridicule which the infidel historian

flings at prophecy and religion, you will not fail to notice that he writes almost like one who believes that the promises and threatenings of God are fulfilled in history.

"In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation; the desolation is complete: and the temple of Diana or the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveler. The circus and the three stately theaters of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes; Sardis is reduced to a miserable village; the God of Mohammed, without a rival or a son, is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamos, and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians. Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy, or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above four score years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect, a column in a scene of ruins, a pleasing example that the paths of honor and safety may sometimes be the same."

II. Next, we have **THE THREE TITLES** by which the Saviour reveals himself to the Philadelphian church.

1. The Saviour calls himself the "holy" one. This attribute of holiness is repeatedly ascribed to Christ. David spake of it when he said, "neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption"; words which the inspired writers of the New Testament have taken up and laid upon the shoulders of Jesus of Nazareth. Gabriel spake of this attribute when he said to the astonished maiden of Galilee, "that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Peter spake of it when he called the prince of life "the holy one and the just." Paul spake of it when he said that our high priest was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." This attribute of holiness in all its fullness cannot be ascribed to the angels, for God charges his angels with folly; it cannot be ascribed to men, for there is not one on earth that doeth good and sinneth not; it belongs only to him who is God over all, blessed forever.

2. The Saviour also calls himself the "true" one. This attribute of truthfulness is often ascribed to Christ. When he was here on earth, he said of himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life"; and his disciples, especially John the beloved, have repeated this thought in an endless variety of forms. The Saviour cannot deceive. He speaks that which is. A promise of his is as much to be relied on as is the actual fulfillment. But the title which the Saviour here claims for himself means something more than that he is truthful; it means also that he is true. He is not a pretender. He is nothing more and nothing less than he claims to be, the Son of God and the Saviour of every one that believes in his name.

3. The Saviour also claims to have supreme power over the kingdom of heaven to admit or exclude whomsoever he will. "He that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." David was a type of Christ, and therefore the house of David can mean nothing else than the Saviour's heavenly home, the glorified church. To show his power over this church, the Saviour quotes and applies to himself a well known passage from the book of Isaiah, which primarily referred to the removal of one treasurer and the appointment of another. A key is the badge of office, a symbol of power. He who carries the key can open and shut the door at his pleasure. And Christ carries the key of his church triumphant. It is true, he has committed the keys of the visible church to his servants here on earth, but he retains the administration of the church invisible, in his own hands. If there is any error in their binding and loosing, as there will sometimes be, "if they make sad any heart which he has not made sad, if they speak peace to any heart to which he has not spoken peace, his judgment shall stand, and not theirs." When he opens the door for any soul to enter, no power in earth or in hell can shut it; when he shuts the door, no power can open it. The church in heaven is the Saviour's home, and of that home he alone carries the key.

It was well to remind the members of the church in Philadelphia, and it is well to remind us of these things. If our Saviour is holy, we should be holy; if he is truthful and true, we should be truthful and sincere; if he carries the keys of heaven, we may be sure that none can steal our crown or shut us out from our recompense of reward.

III. THE SAVIOUR'S ACTUAL MESSAGE to the Philadelphian church, as contained in verses 8-11, consists of three parts, viz., a declaration of knowledge, a particular promise, and an earnest exhortation.

1. The first thing in the message is *the usual declaration of knowledge*. The introductory formula, with which the message to each church begins, "I know thy works," is explained in the words that follow. The Saviour knew that there was an open door before the members of the church of Philadelphia. "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The phrase, "an open door," is frequently used by Paul. In one place, he tells that a "great door and effectual" was opened before him in Ephesus. In another place, he tells that a "great door" was opened unto him in Troas. In another place, he asks the Colossians to pray that God would open for him "a door of utterance." In all these, and similar passages, the meaning of the phrase is obvious. It refers to opportunities for doing good. And it may be that this is its meaning here. The members of the church of Philadelphia had opportunities for doing good. They could preach the gospel and in other ways bring the

truth to the knowledge of their fellow men. There were dying souls all around them, and if they did not do their duty to these dying souls there was no hope for their salvation. But the words, "an open door," referring back to what the Saviour had just said, may point to the fact that they had free access to their heavenly home. Probably the phrase includes both of these ideas, for it can be said that work for Christ on earth is the door through which the Christian enters into the enjoyment of Christ in heaven.

This door, whether it refers to opportunity for doing good, or to access to heaven, or to both, cannot be shut. Wherever the Christian's lot is cast, there is Christian labor to be performed; wherever the Christian dies, from that place there is an easy and shining road to the gates of the celestial city. And this door, which leads to the Christian's work and the Christian's heaven, can never be shut.

The Saviour also knew that they had "a little strength." They were probably a little flock, poor in this world's goods, and despised in the eyes of their fellow-citizens; they had but little strength, and yet that strength had been used for the Saviour's glory. This he knew, for he had put them to the test, and they had kept his word and had not denied his name. They had obeyed the commandments which he had given them as a rule of life. When they had been persecuted and brought before the civil magistrates, who tried to make them renounce their allegiance to Christ, they were faithful to the name by which they had been called. The Saviour knew all this, and for this he praised the members of the church in Philadelphia. And they deserved the praise. It is an easy thing for those who have great strength, either from their wealth, their learning, or their social standing, to be faithful to Christ; but when those who have but little strength, who are looked down upon by their fellows, who are surrounded by all the disadvantages and persecutions which are wont to gather around the lowly, are faithful, they deserve and receive commendation from him who judges not from the outward appearance but from the heart.

2. The next thing in the Saviour's message is a *particular promise* to this weak and despised church of Philadelphia. "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie: behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." It seems that the persecutions from which the Philadelphian Christians suffered, came mainly from the Jews. We know that, in that age of the world, the Jews were the most bitter persecutors of the church. They prided themselves on being the descendants of Abraham, and the only members



of the true church ; but their conduct showed that they did not have the spirit of Abraham, or of the faithful church, of which Abraham was the father. They belonged rather to the synagogue of Satan ; they were his followers ; they took delight in doing his pleasure. And the first part of the special promise to the church of Philadelphia is that the Saviour would so arrange matters in his providence, as to make it appear to all the world that these persecuting Jews were the servants of Satan. Just how he would reveal their true character and make it hideous, we are not told, but this could easily be accomplished by him who holds all things in his hands.

The second part of the special promise is, that the Saviour would make some of these persecuting Jews come and worship at the feet of the Philadelphian Christians, and know the divine love toward them. He would so bless their labors, their example and their influence, that even their enemies would be converted, would come and join in their worship, and would see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts that the Christian church was the church of Jehovah's love. And though history does not record the fulfillment of this promise, we may be sure that it has been fulfilled, for in every century the veil has been removed from some Jewish hearts, who have then been able to recognize the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. Some of the brightest names among Christian theologians and philosophers, have been the names of men who have had the right to call Abraham their father according to the flesh.

The third part of the special promise is expressed in the words, "because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Great calamities were to come upon the world, and great persecutions upon the church. Calamities and persecutions are temptations, that is, trials, for they are sent to try them that dwell upon the earth. They test the faith and constancy of the people of God, and put all others to the proof whether they will repent and turn to the Lord, against whom they had hardened their hearts in the days of their prosperity. But when such seasons of trial came, and they came frequently during the first centuries of the Christian era, the Saviour would keep the members of the Philadelphian church. The promise is not that he would keep them *from* such temptation, but that he would keep them *in* such temptation. He would not give them over to their enemies, he would not suffer their faith to fail, so that in their experience would be fulfilled the words, "blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him." Behold here the correspondence between the promise and the duty performed on which the promise is founded. "Because thou hast *kept* the word of my patience, I also will *keep* thee."

"The word of patience" is the Saviour's word, which enjoins patience. One great characteristic of the word is that it commands patient labor, patient enduring, and patient waiting. Those who keep this word will themselves be kept. This correspondence between the duty and the reward is often to be noticed. "Them that honor me I will honor." "He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven."

3. The next thing in the Saviour's message is *an earnest exhortation*: "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The speedy coming of Christ, which is so often referred to in the New Testament, especially in this book, and which is to be accomplished for every believer at the hour of his death, and for the church and the world at the time of the second advent, is a word of fear to those who are living in carelessness and sin, but a word of comfort and strength to those who are faithfully and patiently waiting for the recompense of the reward. The members of the church of Philadelphia belonged to this second class; and therefore the Saviour, pointing to his speedy coming, exhorts them to hold fast to the faith they possessed and to the attainments they had made. There was occasion for such holding fast, for their crown of glory might be taken away. Of course this figure is not to be pressed beyond its proper measure. No Christian would rob another of his crown if he could. No enemy is able to rob the Christian of his crown. But these enemies are ever making the attempt, and though they cannot entirely succeed, they can mar its brightness, if the Christian is not on his guard. We know that there are degrees in glory; that some will shine with the brightness of the sun, others with the brightness of the moon, and others with the brightness of the stars; and that those who occupy the higher degrees of glory are those who were most faithful and firm during their earthly pilgrimage. By a figure, whose meaning is easy to understand, these degrees of glory may be indicated by the crowns which the glorified wear. Those who are most faithful wear the most glorious crowns, which are radiant with the brightest jewels. He who weakly yields to temptation, who does not hold fast against the world, the flesh and the devil, will not attain to the summits of glory which he might otherwise have reached. His crown will be dimmed, and some of its jewels will be taken away. This exhortation must have appealed powerfully to the Philadelphian Christians; it must appeal powerfully to all of us who are waiting for the coming of our Lord and expecting the glory beyond. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take" or dim "thy crown."

IV. THE SAVIOUR'S PROMISE to the final victor is: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from

my God: and I will write upon him my new name." In the titles prefixed to this epistle, the Saviour had spoken of heaven as a glorious palace or temple, and of himself as the one who held the keys of that heavenly house. He now returns to the same figure, and assures his victorious saints that they will occupy a prominent place in that glorious temple. They are to be made pillars therein. They are to be made strong forever for upholding that eternal structure which is builded for the glory of God. They are to be made beautiful forever for showing forth the attributes of God. They are to be permanent fixtures in the temple, which nothing could destroy or move. Unlike the pillars which upheld their places of worship in Philadelphia, and which were often rocked by earthquakes and tumbled into ruins, these pillars in the heavenly temple were to go out no more. Planted on the rock of ages, builded around with living stones, hewn and polished by the hand of God, they shall stand forever firm, though the world itself might rock as a man might rock a drop of water in the hollow of his hand.

The pillars were not only to be strong, and beautiful, and permanent, they were to be monumental. They were to be covered with inscriptions. That pillars were used for this purpose is well known. Such monumental pillars have been erected to keep alive the memories of earth's warriors, statesmen and philosophers. So the pillars in the heavenly temple will commemorate a greater victory than ever earthly army won, a holier philosophy than was ever taught in the academies of earthly science, and a more glorious king than ever reigned on earth. These pillars are to have a three-fold inscription. First, the name of God is to be graven on them. This inscription would show that the pillar belonged to God, and that it was a triumph of divine love. In the second place, the name of the church would be graven on them. The church is here described as "the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God." The church is often in the Scriptures compared to a city. As the old Jerusalem was the place where God was especially worshiped on earth, this spiritual city is appropriately called the new Jerusalem. As this spiritual city was builded by God for his glory, as he is its king, and as his sons and daughters are its only inhabitants, it is said to come down out of heaven from God. The name of this city inscribed upon the pillar would show that it was a part of the church, and the workmanship of the church's king and head. In the third place, the Saviour's new name would be graven on these pillars; not his old name, by which he was known from all eternity, the Son and equal of God, but the new name by which he has been called since he came to do the Father's will, the Saviour and Redeemer of his people. This name inscribed upon the pillar would show that it was saved and glorified by Christ, and not by another. What a sublime prospect! What a glorious future! To be a pillar in the celestial temple, a pillar which can never be moved, a pillar made beautiful by divine grace beyond all earthly comparison, a pillar

to bear aloft through unending ages the three-fold name of God, of the church, and of the Saviour; this is an honor worthy the ambition of the immortal soul!

V. And this honor is within the reach of all to whom the gospel comes, for the Saviour concludes this epistle, and opens the door of the heavenly temple for our entrance, by THE USUAL CALL TO ATTENTION and obedience. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

We may not hope to have a place in the church in heaven, if we do not have a place in the church on earth. These churches are one. They are parts of the same organization; they are divisions of the same great army. And we have reason for believing that the degrees of glory in the one will correspond with the degrees of grace in the other. Those who are most faithful in the service of Christ here will shine with the brightness of the sun hereafter. Those who are least faithful in the service of Christ here will shine only as the stars hereafter. If this is so, we cannot hope to be pillars in the heavenly temple unless we are pillars in the earthly. Are we? Are we, by our words, by our influence, and by our contributions, strengthening the church on earth, and thus fulfilling the office which is expected of pillars in a material structure? Are we, by our lives, making the church more beautiful, and thus fulfilling another office which is expected of pillars in a material structure? Are we, every day, like monumental pillars, lifting up to the attention and admiration of men the name of God, the name of the church, and the name of the Saviour? If we are not, we have no right to hope for the glory which is here revealed. If we are, we may look forward with confidence to the time when these words of the Saviour will be fulfilled in us, "him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God."

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## LECTURE X.

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### THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as

I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—REV. 3: 14-22.

THE epistle to the church of the Laodiceans is the sharpest and most sorrowful of them all. It expresses a state of spiritual declension, which must sadden the heart of every true Christian, and make it tremble in view of the just judgments of an offended God. It contains the five parts which by frequent repetition must have become fixed in our memory.

I. We have THE SAVIOUR'S COMMAND TO WRITE this epistle. "Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write"; or rather, as it is in the margin of our Bibles, "unto the angel of the church in Laodicea write"; for there is no good reason why the form of this command should differ from that of the preceding commands. Laodicea was a large city, situated about fifty miles south-east of Philadelphia, and about the same distance from Ephesus. Its name is not unknown in history. We read of it in the letters of Cicero, the Roman orator, who visited it and administered justice there, while he was proconsul of Cilicia. We read that it was afterwards destroyed by an earthquake, and rebuilt by the energy of its inhabitants. We read that a church council was held there, at which the canon of the Scriptures was declared. We read that it was totally destroyed by a Turkish invasion during the fourteenth century. Its name is also mentioned in Paul's letter to Colosse, a city only a few miles distant. In one place he tells us that he had "a great conflict for them in Laodicea." In another place he says "salute the brethren in Laodicea." In another place he says "when this epistle has been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle to Laodicea." This does not mean that Paul wrote a letter to the church of Laodicea, which is now lost. We have good reason for believing that the letter which he thus describes was a circular letter, one copy of which was addressed to the church in Laodicea, another copy to the church in Ephesus, and one copy to each of the other churches to which he wished it to be sent; and that we have this letter in the New Testament under the name of the epistle to the Ephesians.

We do not know by whom the church in Laodicea had been planted, but it seems probable that it was planted by Paul himself. In the passages we have quoted, we have seen his intense interest in that church. In the Acts of the Apostles, his journeys "through all the country of Phrygia" are twice spoken of; and Laodicea was one of the most important cities in that province. We know, too, that Paul lived and labored for three years in Ephesus, only about fifty miles distant, and it does not accord

with his untiring zeal, to suppose that he would live for three years in Ephesus without paying a visit to Laodicea, its populous neighbor; for in those days Laodicea was populous, though its desolation is now complete. A miserable village of about sixty inhabitants, and wide extended ruins of theaters, aqueducts, palaces and temples, are all that now remain to mark its site. One who recently made it a short visit hurried away from it in the midst of a furious storm. "We preferred hurrying on to further delay in that melancholy spot, where every thing whispered desolation, and where every wind that swept impetuously through the valley sounded like the fiendish laugh of time, exulting over the destruction of man and his proudest monuments."

II. THE SAVIOUR'S TITLE is revealed in these words: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." The Saviour here claims to be the "Amen." This is a Hebrew word which means "verily," and which has been incorporated into all languages. It is a word with which we are familiar, for according to Christian custom it concludes every prayer; and it is of frequent occurrence in our Lord's discourses, especially in the well known form, "verily, verily I say unto you." It is a word of strong affirmation and of hearty assent. When applied to Christ it means that what he affirms is true, and that what he says is certain.

Its meaning is fully explained in the next title which the Saviour claims for himself, "the faithful and true witness." He is a witness, for he came to reveal God and to bear testimony of the divine character. He is a faithful witness, for his testimony is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He is a true witness, for he testifies from his own knowledge. He has all the qualifications of a witness. He has seen with his own eyes those things to which he bears testimony; and he is competent and willing to tell what he has seen. Therefore, he is a faithful and true witness, who can say, as he did say to Nicodemus, "amen, amen I say unto you, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

The Saviour also claims to be "the beginning of the creation of God." This can not mean that he was the first creature whom God created, for the Scriptures plainly teach that Christ is the uncreated one. It may mean that he is the author of creation, for we know that he is the Creator. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." But the word which is translated "beginning," is generally translated "principality." As for example in the well known passages: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"; "unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of

God." And this is its meaning here. The Saviour is the first, the primate, the prince of the creation of God. This is in harmony with the context; this agrees with other Scriptures; for we are told that all power is given unto him in heaven and earth, and that all things are put under his feet.

These titles are especially appropriate in the epistle to the lukewarm church of Laodicea. It was well for the members of that church to remember that their Saviour was "the amen, the faithful and true witness," and that any testimony he gave against them was infallibly true. It was well for them to remember that he was the ruler over all, and that he was able to inflict any just punishment. It is equally important for us, tempted as we are to lukewarmness and indifference, to remember that our Lord is "the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

III. THE SAVIOUR'S ACTUAL MESSAGE to the Laodicean church is contained in verses 15-20. This message may be divided into three parts, a declaration of knowledge, a threatening, and an exhortation.

1. The works of the Laodicean church, which the Saviour knew, had in them nothing to commend them. He knew that the members of that church were "neither cold nor hot," and he expresses the desire that they were either the one or the other. This declaration must fill our hearts with wonder. We can easily understand why a fervent state is more desirable than a lukewarm one, but we are apt to think that a lukewarm state is better than one of utter coldness. If, however, we get a clear idea of the terms employed, we will see that any other spiritual condition is to be preferred to that of lukewarmness. What, then, is the meaning of the terms? We can have no difficulty in fixing the meaning of the word "hot." The Christians who are thus described are they who are fervent and glowing in their love towards Christ. They are they who know and appreciate what Christ has done for them, and who out of the gratitude of their hearts devote themselves unreservedly to the service of their Redeemer. They are they who can say with Paul, "the love of Christ constraineth me"; or with John, "we love him because he first loved us"; or with Peter, "thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." On the other hand, those who are described as "cold" are the ones whose hearts have never been touched by the power of grace. They are strangers to God and to the work of redemption. Of such men there is always the hope that when they do come under the power of grace, they may become true and earnest Christians. Between these two extremes are those who are described as lukewarm. They are those upon whom the experiment of the gospel has been tried and has failed. They are those who have heard the invitations of the gospel and have hardened their hearts in unbelief. They are

those who have tasted the good word of God and have rejected it. Of such there is little hope. Let me illustrate by a few examples. During our Lord's earthly pilgrimage, publicans and harlots were cold, the scribes and pharisees were lukewarm. And we know that it was from the former, and not from the latter, that our Lord filled up the ranks of his disciples. We know that Matthew, and Zaccheus, and Mary Magdalene, and many others of the former class entered the kingdom of heaven, while the scribes and pharisees were shut out. Or take another example. Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, was cold; Simon Magus, the professed disciple, was lukewarm. Or take still another example. The apostles were hot; Judas Iscariot was lukewarm; the woman of Samaria was cold. From these examples you will readily see that any other spiritual condition is to be preferred to that of lukewarmness. Those who are cold, who are in a state of utter ignorance or open opposition, are more honest and honorable than those who are lukewarm. There is far more hope for the salvation of the former, than of the latter. This lukewarm condition was the condition of the Laodicean church. They were like the scribes and pharisees, like Judas, like Simon Magus. They had professed religion when they had no religion to profess. On them the power of the gospel had been brought to bear in vain. No wonder the Saviour says, "I would thou wert cold or hot."

2. And it is no wonder that he pronounces against them *the threatening*, which is the second thing in his actual message. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The reference is to the well known fact that tepid water tends to produce nausea. The figure is a strong one, and indicates, with an emphasis which cannot be described, the Saviour's intense loathing and disgust at the condition of things in the church of Laodicea. The meaning is obvious. The Laodiceans would be rejected and cast off as a church. This threatening has been literally fulfilled. This threatening and its fulfillment may well startle all professing Christians and all Christian churches, that have reason to fear that they may be lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot.

3. The next thing in the Saviour's message is *an earnest exhortation*. The worst symptom about the Laodicean Christians, and in this respect they do not differ from other lukewarm professors, was, that they were ignorant of their true condition. They thought that they were rich and growing in riches, and that they had need of nothing. These words may refer to literal wealth, for it seems evident that they were rich in this world's goods; but it seems more probable that they refer to spiritual riches. The Laodiceans thought that they were model Christians. They boasted of their faith, and their love, and their attainments in the divine life. Such was their estimate of themselves, but the reality was far different. They were "wretched and miserable." Their condition was one of abject



wretchedness, one which called for pity. And they were "poor." Notwithstanding all their boasted wealth, they had no religion to meet the wants of their souls. And they were "blind." Notwithstanding their boast that they had need of nothing, they were in spiritual darkness, they could not see their true condition, or the character of God, or the way of salvation. And they were "naked." Notwithstanding their complacency, they had nothing to cover the nakedness of their souls, they were without the garment of salvation. And saddest of all, though they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked," they did not know that this was their condition. When one who is naked flatters himself that he is clothed in royal robes, when one who is blind flatters himself that he can see all things, when one who is poor flatters himself that he possesses the whole world, when one who is wretched and miserable flatters himself that he is the happiest of men, he is to be pitied, not so much because of his blindness, nakedness, poverty and wretchedness, as because of his self deception. This was the state of the Laodicean church. Therefore the Saviour, out of the compassion of his loving heart, turns to them with earnest exhortation. He exhorts them to buy of him "gold tried in the fire," that is, the purest gold, that they might be rich. Gold, which is the most precious of metals, is here of course the symbol of true religion. Those who have true religion, which can be received from Christ alone, are spiritually rich, for true religion supplies every want of the soul. He exhorts them again to buy of him "white raiment that they may be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness do not appear." The white raiment is of course the emblem of salvation. Those who are clothed with the garment of salvation have a robe which will never grow old and which will hide the shame of their sinfulness forever. He exhorts them also to buy of him "eyesalve" with which to anoint their eyes that they may see. The eyesalve is of course the emblem of the gospel. When this is applied by the Spirit to the spiritual eyes, they can discern clearly the character of God, the beauty of Christ, and the way of salvation. When this is applied to the spiritual eyes, they will never grow dim, they will be able to bear unharmed the brightness of the divine glory.

It is to be observed that, in this exhortation, the Saviour uses language which the Laodiceans could understand. Theirs was a commercial city. They were buying and selling and getting gain. He, therefore, using their own dialect, points them to a better merchandise than that in which they were accustomed to traffic. It is also to be observed that in reading this exhortation, the emphasis should be placed on the words "of me." For this fine gold, and white raiment, and healing eyesalve, can be obtained from no one else. It is also to be observed that this buying, as Isaiah tells us, is "without money and without price."

The second part of the Saviour's exhortation is expressed in the words,

"as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten ; be zealous therefore and repent." The Saviour here reveals himself as a true friend. He is not one of those who keep their harsh words for their enemies and their soft words for their friends. He rebukes those he loves when they deserve it. Like a faithful father, he chastens his children because he loves them. And because of this love, and the rebukes and chastisements in which this love manifests itself, he exhorts the Laodiceans to "be zealous and repent." The meaning of this exhortation is obvious. They were not only to exercise that repentance which includes sorrow for the past and reformation for the future ; they were also to be earnest and ardent in their repentance. They were to lose no time and spare no labor that they might escape from the rebukes and judgments which would come upon them if they did not repent. This is an exhortation which should be heeded by us all. As surely as the Saviour loves us, he will not permit our unfaithfulness to go unpunished, for his language is, "as many as I love I rebuke and chasten."

It is true, the Laodiceans had gone far astray, but the door of hope was not closed against them. To encourage them to obey his exhortation, the Saviour assures them that he was waiting to be gracious. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." This figure is so plain, referring, as it does, to a matter of daily occurrence, that it requires little explanation. As we approach the door of a friend or neighbor, and by knocking, or some other conventional sign, declare our presence and ask for admission, so Christ presents himself at the door of the sinner's heart. He not only knocks, he also causes his voice to be heard, and by this voice he reveals unmistakably who he is. An enemy might knock, but the Saviour's gentle voice cannot be mistaken for another's. He knocks and speaks by his providences, by his word and by his Spirit. By these, he asks for a place in the sinner's heart ; by these, he pleads for the sinner's love. There is not one of us who can say, I never heard the Saviour's knock or voice ; I never heard the invitations of the gospel. He is yet standing at the door of some of us, for his knock and his voice have been unheeded. And if they are unheeded, he will not enter. He does not break down the door and force an entrance. There is a sense in which every man is lord over his own heart. Through divine grace, he has it in his power to open the door and to welcome the heavenly visitor ; or he may keep the door closed to the very end, and live and die in the utter loneliness of him whom the Lord has forsaken. Of course, this figure must not be pushed too far. Men can open the door only when Christ knocks ; they would have no desire to open, unless with the external knocking of the word, and of sorrow, and of pain, there was also the inward voice of the Spirit. If a man will hear this external call and yield himself to this internal voice and open the door, Jesus will come in and live on

terms of closest intimacy with him. Such an exhibition of love should have moved every lukewarm heart in Laodicea to open wide its doors; but we have no reason to believe that it did, for to this day, in every Christian congregation, there are those who, notwithstanding the most tender calls and the most loving entreaties, are shutting the Saviour out from their hearts.

IV. THE PROMISE to the final victor is, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Those who obtain the victory over their spiritual foes are to share the throne of glory with Christ. They resemble Christ. When he came to earth, he had a battle to fight and a victory to win; and when that battle was fought and that victory was won, he was seated on the throne of victory. So his people have a battle to fight and a victory to win; and when their battle is fought and their victory won, they too will be seated on the throne of victory. There is much about the final enthronement of the saints in glory which we do not yet understand. For a full understanding of it, we must wait till the hereafter is come. But this we know: it is to be a glorious honor, for it is to be with Christ; it will be a permanent honor, for it will be to sit with him on an everlasting throne; it is an honor which belongs to all the saints, for no one can rob a single victor of his crown; it is an honor which the Saviour has a right to give, for as he said to his disciples here on earth, so he is saying yet, and so will he continue to say till the end, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me."

V. This honor, glorious beyond all earthly comparison, is within the reach of us all, for the Saviour concludes this epistle as he had concluded all the others, with his UNIVERSAL CALL TO ATTENTION and obedience, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

I cannot turn from this epistle to the church of the Laodiceans without referring once more to the love of Jesus who stands at the door and knocks. Some of us have heard his voice, and have opened the door, and we are now enjoying the blessedness of those who hold constant and intimate fellowship with him. But some, though they have heard the voice, have not opened the door, and the Saviour still stands without. How long is this to continue? Why will you treat the Saviour as you would not treat an earthly friend? Nor will there ever be a more favorable time for receiving Christ and all the benefits of the gospel. Remembering that there is a possibility of the Saviour withdrawing himself forever, it is not wise to defer a duty which is so essential to our happiness. On our opening the door depends all the consolation of grace in the present life, and all the glory of the life

to come. If we do not open the door, we cannot expect to have fulfilled in us the exalted promise, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

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## LECTURE XI.

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### GENERAL REMARKS ON THE EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.  
REV. 3:22.

WE have now finished our exposition of the second part of the book of Revelation. Before we enter upon the exposition of the third part, there are some thoughts suggested by the epistles, to which in the present lecture I wish to call attention. You will remember the circumstances in which this mysterious vision was seen. The aged John was an exile on the island of Patmos. On a certain Sabbath day, the Holy Ghost took such possession of his faculties that he was "in the spirit." In his vision he saw the interior of a magnificent tabernacle, fashioned after the temple in Jerusalem, in which John had often worshiped. He saw, no doubt, all the furniture peculiar to such a place, but the things which especially claimed his attention were the seven golden lamp-stands, and the high priest clothed in his priestly robes, who was walking among them. This high priest revealed himself to the apostle not only as the Son of man but also as the Son of God, possessed of divine attributes. John at once recognized him as the Saviour, whom he had not seen since he had parted with him, sixty years before, on the summit of Olivet. This high priest commands John to write the things he had seen, the things which were, and the things which were to be hereafter; and John obeys. In chapter I he writes of the vision he had seen. In the epistles to the seven churches, contained in chapters II and III, he writes of the things that then existed in the church on earth. And now, as we leave the second part of this book, and before we enter upon the third, let us discuss a few thoughts which could not be appropriately discussed in the exposition of any one of the seven epistles.

I. Notice THE REMARKABLE SIMILARITY in the structure of these epistles. They are the work of the same mind and the same hand; they have all been run in the same mould. As I have had occasion to say so often, they all contain the same general divisions. And there is a similarity between the corresponding divisions which cannot be overlooked. The first

division, viz., the Saviour's command to write, is expressed in the same words, save the name of the church to which the epistle is addressed. It is to be observed that though each epistle is intended for the entire church, it is addressed to the angel or pastor of the church. This indicates the representative character of the true pastor, his responsibility for the congregation to which he ministers, and his oneness with his people. And it seems that these three things are fulfilled, not in Congregationalism, or in Episcopacy, but in the Presbyterian form of church government.

In the second division, viz., the Saviour's titles, there is a similarity in this,—these titles are all drawn from the introductory vision until that vision is exhausted, and then similar titles, gathered from other parts of the word of God, are chosen. But all these titles point so manifestly to the promised Christ, that there never has been and never can be a doubt as to the person speaking.

In the third division, viz., the Saviour's actual message, there is always a declaration of knowledge, introduced by the unvarying formula, "I know thy works." And there is in each message, praise and blame, threatening and exhortation, suited to the circumstances of the church addressed.

In the fourth division, viz., the Saviour's promise, that promise is always addressed to him that overcometh; and though there is a variation in the things promised, they all refer to heaven.

The fifth division, viz., the Saviour's call to universal attention and obedience, is always expressed in the same words, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

II. Notice THE REMARKABLE VARIETY in the contents of these epistles. This is most noticeable in the second, third and fourth divisions; for the first and fifth remain substantially the same in all the epistles.

The titles by which the Saviour reveals himself have a direct and beautiful bearing on the circumstances of the church addressed. He reminds the members of the Ephesian church who were forsaking their first love, that he held the seven stars in his hand, and that he walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; that he was therefore able to take away the stars, that is, the ministry, and to remove the candlestick, that is, the church, if they did not repent and do their first works. He reminds the members of the church in Smyrna, who were in poverty and tribulation, that he was the first and the last, who was dead and is alive; and that, therefore, he could sympathize and deliver. He reminds the members of the church in Pergamos, who were tolerating Balaamites and Nicolaitanes, that he held a sharp sword with two edges; and that, therefore, he could smite and kill. He reminds the members of the church in Thyatira, who were tolerating that woman Jezebel and her sinful children, that his eyes were like a flame of fire, and his feet were like fine brass; and that, therefore, any sin, how-

ever hidden, could not be concealed from his sight, and that no combination could successfully oppose the stately steppings of his onward progress. He reminds the members of the church in Sardis, who had only a name to live, while they were dead, that he held the seven spirits of God and the seven stars; and that, therefore, he alone was able to revive their hearts. He reminds the members of the church in Philadelphia, who were poor and despised, and yet faithful to his name, that he was holy and true, that he had the key of David, that when he opened, none shut, and when he shut, none opened; and that, therefore, their place and their crown in his Father's house could not be taken away from them. He reminds the members of the church in Laodicea, who were lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, that he was the amen, and the faithful and true witness; and that, therefore, the emphatic testimony he bore against them could not be questioned.

There is a noticeable diversity in the Saviour's messages, as well as in his titles. He knew the works of them all, and he suited his message to the condition of each church. For two of them, Smyrna and Philadelphia, he has nothing but praise; for one of them, Laodicea, he has nothing but blame; for the others, praise and blame are mingled in different proportions; in some the praise predominates, in others the blame.

There is also a noticeable diversity in the Saviour's promises to the final victor. To one, he promises the tree of life; to another, freedom from the second death; to another, the hidden manna and the white stone; to another, power over the nations and the morning star; to another, white raiment; to another, that he would be a pillar in the heavenly temple; and to another, that he would have a place on the throne of glory.

These points of similarity and dissimilarity deserve attention. In this respect these epistles stand alone. Nothing like them is to be found elsewhere in the word of God. The epistles of Paul resemble each other in a few particulars, but it is impossible to trace any general resemblance in structure. The four gospels have to do with the same life and with the same work, and yet they are not written on the same plan. These seven epistles, one in structure and varied in contents, stand apart from the rest of inspiration. Their similarity makes them easily remembered; the diversity of their contents makes them interesting; therefore they have ever held, and they will ever continue to hold, a high place in the heart of the people of God.

III. Let us get a clear idea of the persons to whom these epistles were addressed, or rather of THE CHURCHES which are described in these epistles. In a previous lecture I stated that some expositors regard these seven epistles as giving an unbroken history of the church from the days of John to the consummation of all things. Let me give a brief sketch of this theory. I will not attempt to fix the dates, for every advocate of the

theory has his own system of chronology ; I will give only a general outline. According to this theory, the epistle to the church in Ephesus describes the condition of the church during the two or three centuries which followed the apostolic age. During these centuries the church began to leave its first love. Pagan philosophers corrupted it, so that Christians did not have the same fervent love which the apostles had. And these words in the epistle to the church in Ephesus do describe the state of the church during this period : " I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly."

After this, violent persecutions arose, which continued about a hundred years. One Roman emperor after another tried to destroy the church. During these years, the saints were in poverty and tribulation. The names of some of the distinguished martyrs of that period have been preserved in history, but thousands and tens of thousands were called to seal their testimony with their blood, whose names have long been forgotten on earth, though they occupy no mean place in the Lamb's book of life. This period is supposed to be described in the epistle to the church of Sardis, where it is said, " Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

After this, under Constantine and his successors, there was a union of the church and state. The church was put under the power of the state. Emperors, recently converted from heathenism, with many of their heathen prejudices still clinging to them, ruled over the saints of God, and by their authority and example introduced into Christian worship many of the sinful practices to which they had been accustomed in the temples of their idols. Under their influence the church became so corrupt, though some were faithful, that it has been called a baptized paganism. This period is supposed to be described in the epistle to the church of Pergamos, where it is said, " Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."

After this, Papacy lorded it over the consciences of men in the seventh and following centuries. Even in these dark ages there were a few who were faithful; but the great mass of the church was too corrupt and degraded to be described. Damning heresies in doctrine and foul immoralities in practice were the rule, and not the exception. So impure and unholy did the church of Rome become, that she well deserves the name of the great harlot, which is given to her in the Scriptures. Every one who can have patience to read the history of the Popes during these ages

to which I refer, will see the appropriateness of this name. It is supposed that the church of Rome is described in the epistle to the church of Thyatira, under the name of "that woman, Jezebel." And it must be confessed, even by those who reject this theory, that the similarity is wonderful. "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."

After this the reformation began to dawn. Here and there a brave soul testified against the corruptions of the dominant church, and sealed his testimony with his blood. But these faithful ones, though their names are to be held in lasting remembrance, made little headway against that great church, which had a name to live while it was dead. This is supposed to be described in the epistle to the church of Sardis: "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."

After this, came the time of the second reformation, of the Puritans, of the Methodists, and of others, whose intense zeal stirred the world. It was a time of revivals and of missions. Old established churches were quickened into new life, and the banner of the cross was planted in almost every land under the whole heaven. Such a time of spiritual activity and of missionary effort had not been seen since the apostolic age. All this has been going on during the past two centuries; and all this is supposed to be described in the epistle to the church of Philadelphia, before which God had opened a door of usefulness, which no man could shut. The missionary efforts and the success of the church are supposed to be described in the words, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

According to this theory, this sixth period, which is described in the sixth epistle, is just ending, and we are entering upon the seventh and last period, which is described in the epistle to the Laodicean church. It is a period of lukewarmness, of outward profession, but of spiritual death—a period which excites the intense loathing and disgust of the loving Saviour, and which is before very long to give place to the startling scenes of the promised millenium.

This is the theory to which I have referred. It is certainly beautiful and plausible. But is it true? Were these epistles designed by the Spirit to give a consecutive history of the church from the time of John to the end of the present order of things? I think not, for the reason already



stated. The high priest whom John saw in the midst of the golden candlesticks, told him to write the things which then were; and this command he obeys in these seven epistles. For this reason, so plain and so simple that it must be convincing, I believe that the seven epistles do not describe the church then future, but the church as it then existed on the earth. But while this is true, human nature, and even sanctified human nature, is the same in all ages. Individual experience and the history of the church are continually repeating themselves. Therefore, though these epistles have primary reference to the church and the Christians of eighteen hundred years ago, we may expect to find in them much that is descriptive of every age since and much that is profitable for every Christian now.

But it may be said, "if these epistles were intended to describe the church as it then existed, why are they just seven in number? There were certainly more churches than seven; and those whose names are mentioned in these chapters are not by any means the largest and most celebrated of the churches in the days of John." It is true there were more than seven churches, but the number seven, as has been said more than once, is the symbol of completeness. Therefore, according to scripture language, seven churches would include the complete church.

Permit me to say something with regard to the symbolical numbers of the Scriptures. The following statement is condensed from one of the ablest writers of the day—Dr. J. A. Seiss—and while I cannot endorse his entire theory, I think it in the main correct. In this statement I will omit his argument and give only his conclusion. One, the source and parent of all numbers, stands for God, the first great cause, the unity of heaven. Two, which proceeds from one and rests on one, stands for Christ, the second person of the Trinity. Three is the number of individual completeness, and it stands for the Trinity. As man is body, soul and spirit, three in one, so the Godhead is Father, Son and Spirit, three in one. Four is the worldly number, and represents the creation of God. To illustrate: There are four elements, four points of the compass, the four seasons, the four living creatures, and the four cherubim in Ezekiel's vision. Five is the number of incompleteness. Five fingers are but half of what pertains to a complete man. The five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins each represent but a part of the human race. Six is Satan's number. Six, written three times, for three is the number of individual completeness, represents the individual completeness of all evil. Therefore, this number, viz., 666, is the number of anti-Christ. On the sixth day of the week Christ was crucified, and this is yet the usual day for the execution of criminals. May it not be that the popular superstition that Friday, the sixth day of the week, is the most unlucky of the seven, may be traced to the fact that this is Satan's number? Seven is the number of dispensational fullness, or completeness in the manifesta-

tions of God's grace. Thus there are the seven days of the week, the seven epistles, the seven spirits of God, the seven stars, the seven candlesticks, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven vials. In fact, the book of Revelation may be called the book of sevens. Eight is the number of a new beginning. Thus the eighth day is the beginning of a new week. Noah was the eighth person saved from the flood, and the father of a new world. Ten is the number of worldly completion. There are ten fingers in the complete man. The moral law has ten commandments. The virgins, who represented the entire church in the world, were ten, five wise and five foolish. Twelve is the number of final completeness. There are twelve months in the year, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles of the lamb, twelve gates in the New Jerusalem and twelve fruits on the tree of life. It will be well to remember the significance of these Scripture numbers, for thus we will be assisted in understanding the mysterious visions which are shortly to engage our attention.

IV. We may learn from these seven epistles what the Saviour regards as THE TRUE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS EARTHLY FOLLOWERS. In each church he finds some faithful, and he describes them. In Ephesus, there were those who labored and were patient and who could not bear them that were evil. In Smyrna, there were those who unflinchingly endured all the persecutions and tribulations which came upon them. In Pergamos, there were those who had not denied the Saviour's name, and who had held fast the Saviour's faith. In Thyatira, there were those who had charity, service, faith and patience, and who were making progress in these things, for their last works were more than their first. In Sardis, there were those who had not defiled their garments, and who walked in unspotted robes even in the midst of the pollutions of the world. In Philadelphia, there were those who had kept the Saviour's word and had not denied his name. In Laodicea, there were those who had received rebukes and chastisements as the evidences of the Father's love. And these are the characteristics of the saints yet. If we have not all, or at least some of these characteristics, we have no right to flatter ourselves that we are among the people who have been bought with a price, and who are marching to the freedom of glory.

V. We may learn from these epistles something of WHAT HEAVEN IS. We often long to know, but our longings are not fully gratified. However, a few glimpses are vouchsafed to us. There is not in the word of God, except in the closing chapters of this book, a more complete revelation of the joys and honors of heaven than is to be found in the promises which conclude these seven epistles, and which have undoubted reference to the heavenly rest. The victors of Ephesus were to eat of the tree of life, which

is in the midst of the paradise of God. The victors of Smyrna were to be delivered from the second death. The victors of Pergamos were to eat of the hidden manna, and to receive the white stone and the new name. The victors of Thyatira were to have power over the nations and to receive the morning star. The victors of Sardis were to be clothed in white raiment. The victors of Philadelphia were to be pillars in the temple of God, which could never be shaken, and on which were to be inscribed forever the name of God, of the church, and of the Saviour. The victors of Laodicea were to sit with Christ on his throne. Place all these promises together in beautiful harmony, and you have a picture of that heaven towards which some of us are traveling, and into which we all may enter through the new and living way which Jesus has opened. When we stand beneath the tree of life and partake of its life-giving fruit; when we are not disturbed by a single fear of the second, the everlasting death; when we eat of the manna laid up in heaven, and wear the signet ring of the great king set with the brilliant gem, on which is engraven the new name of the new-born child of glory; when we rule the world, and enter upon the light and beauty of the morning star, which is Christ the Lord; when we walk in the white robes of glory, which will never grow old, and which nothing can defile; when we stand evermore like pillars around the throne to make known to principalities and powers the love of God, and the history of the church, and the grace of the Saviour; when we sit with Christ on his everlasting throne—then we will be in heaven.

VI. These epistles look to THE PRESENT as well as to the future. They are mirrors, in which we can see ourselves reflected. Which of these churches do we resemble? We must resemble some one of them, for these seven churches embrace all possible conditions of the earthly church. I have not time to dwell on this point. I therefore leave it as a subject of self-examination. But if it is, as I greatly fear, that we most resemble the church of Laodicea, which was lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, let us tremble at the threatening addressed to that church: "I will spue thee out of my mouth." Let us heed the tender exhortation, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." And let us struggle to obtain for ourselves the fulfillment of the promise, "Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

## LECTURE XII.

## THE VISION OF HEAVEN.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven : and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me ; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit : and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone : and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats : and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.—REV. 4: 1-4.

WE now enter upon the third, the prophetic part of this book, viz., the history of what was to be after the days of John. It is a history of wonderful events, of wars and of rumors of wars, of judgments mingled with mercies, of the rise and fall of nations, and of the onward progress of the church towards its final glory. These many events, so wonderful, so confusing and so complicated, cannot be intelligently studied from an earthly standpoint. Therefore, John was carried in the spirit into heaven, and thence was permitted to look upon the things which were to be. If we would be successful in our investigation of these visions, we must study them from the same standpoint, we must look upon them from the heavenly side.

Such visions as those John was about to see have not often been vouchsafed to men. They were visions which unfolded in some measure the plans of God for the triumph of the church and the punishment of his enemies. The man who was to receive such revelations as these needed special preparation. He needed to have his faculties sharpened, and his soul filled with awe and reverence. John is therefore introduced into what we might call the great council of heaven, and is permitted to see the king and his servants, as they devise and carry out the decrees of heaven. This scene, which introduces the opening of the seals, the blowing of the trumpets, and the pouring out of the vials, fitted the apostle for the revelations which he was about to receive, and which he was commissioned to make known to all the generations of coming time. This introductory vision is contained in chapters IV and V. In that part of it which will constitute the subject of the present lecture, there are these points, of which I will speak in their order ; the place of the heavenly vision ; the heavenly throne and its occupant and its overarching rainbow ; and the four and twenty elders.

I. THE PLACE OF THE HEAVENLY VISION is described in these words :  
 “ after this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven : and the

first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me ; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit." Let us return for a few moments to the apostle's first vision. He was exiled to Patmos "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus." On a certain Sabbath, the Spirit took possession of him, and in the introductory vision he saw the interior of a magnificent tabernacle with its candlestick and its high priest. That high priest, who was none other than the great High Priest of our profession, commanded John to write an epistle to each of the seven churches of Asia, epistles which were to describe the things which then were. But now, higher and holier things were to be revealed to the seer of Patmos. His strengthened eye was to look through all the centuries yet to come ; he was to see the mustering of Satan's hosts, their fierce attacks on the church, their final and hopeless defeat ; he was to see the mighty army of the redeemed marching to glory, and the gathering of the general assembly and church of the first born ; he was to see the great things which God has in reserve for his children when they are all brought to their heavenly home. To see all this, it was fitting that he should be introduced into other scenes than those which had been an appropriate background for the former vision. Therefore, a door was opened in heaven. It was not a window, through which he might look and catch glimpses of what was transpiring on the other side. It was a door, through which he could enter, and through which, as we will see by and by, he did enter in spirit, and stand in the very midst of the things he was moved to describe. We may well believe that the entranced apostle, when he saw the door opened which led to the mysteries of heaven, and beheld the bright glimpses of the reflected glory, and heard the voices and the thunderings which proceeded from the throne, was astonished beyond measure ; but his astonishment was to be greater still. As he stood gazing up into that open door, as many years before he had stood gazing up into heaven after the ascending Saviour, he heard a voice speaking unto him. It was a voice he had heard before, with which he was familiar, which had spoken with him at the first, and which had given him the epistles to the seven churches. There can be no doubt as to whose voice it was, for in chapter I : 10, 11, it is said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." This same "Alpha and Omega" now addressed the apostle, for the words, "the first voice which I heard," do not mean, as they seem to mean in our translation, that this was the first voice which he heard in the present vision, but the first voice which he had heard in the former vision.

The voice of this speaker was clear and startling, like the stirring call of a trumpet, but it uttered words of blessed invitation. "Come up hith-

er, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." John obeyed the invitation. It is true, he does not tell us in so many words that he entered the open door, but we know from what he tells us afterwards that he did stand in the midst of the things which he saw; and he does tell us that immediately he was in the Spirit. That is, the Spirit took possession of his faculties, and carried them whithersoever he would; he opened his eyes to see things they would not otherwise have seen, and unstopped his ears to hear things they would not otherwise have heard. I suppose the body of the apostle remained on the island of Patmos, and that the visions he saw were made to pass before him. But this is a matter of little importance. Wherever he was, these wonderful pictures of the future were unrolled in his presence. It will help us to understand these visions, if we imitate the inspired apostle's manner of speaking, and describe all that he saw as actual occurrences. You will not, therefore, misunderstand me, if in my future lectures I speak of the visions as verities.

John entered the open door of heaven. Let us with reverent hearts follow his footsteps. Some day, and that before very long, a similar invitation will be addressed to us. In the last hours of dissolving nature, when heart and flesh faint and fail, the words "come up hither" will be whispered in our ears. Those who stand around us will not hear them, but our souls will be quick to hear and obey. Then will we, in actual fact, stand in the midst of those glorious scenes, which we so vainly try to realize to-day. But even now we can, under the guidance of the Spirit, who led the apostle, enter the presence of the throne. While waiting to enter let us gather up in our memories the manner in which the saints of old approached the mysteries of God, and let us with reverence and humility follow their example. Like Moses at the burning bush, let us put our polluted sandals from our feet, for the crystal pavement on which we are to stand is holy ground. Like the children of Israel at Sinai, let us tremble at the sights we are to see, and the voices we are to hear. Like the apostles on the mount of Transfiguration, let us fear as we enter the cloud of glory. Like the apostles on the mount of Olivet, let us gaze steadfastly into heaven.

The thought is indeed thrilling and sublime. We are to see the moving forces which govern human destiny as they emanate from the throne of the universe. We are to see where the thunderbolts of Jehovah's wrath are forged, where his lightnings are stored, and where the plague and pestilence are kept until the time comes for them to do their deadly work on earth. We are to see the agents of God as they receive their commissions to go forth and execute the divine will, and we are to watch them as they destroy kingdoms, and set up kings, and make all things work together for the good of the saints. We are to see the hidden machinery of those divine providences by which human affairs are ruled and

human destiny fixed. We are to see that the things which transpire on earth are but the working out of the decrees of heaven. In one word, we are to see the hand of God as it guides the whole creation for his glory. Let us, then, with reverence and awe enter with John the open door of heaven, and see the things which he saw, and hear the things which he heard, and learn from the very source of all knowledge the things which were to be thereafter.

II. The first thing which John saw when he entered the open door was THE GREAT THRONE OF HEAVEN. This is the second division in the subject of my morning's lecture. But before we enter upon its consideration, let us describe, in general terms, the heavenly scenery in which the apostle stood. The tabernacle and its furniture, which the apostle saw in the former vision, had vanished, and a more exalted scene now presented itself. All the heavenly landscape is not described at once. Piece by piece it is brought into view as it attracts the notice of the seer, or as it is necessary to explain his successive visions. But it must be remembered that the scenery which now appears before his eyes remains unchanged till the end of the book. Let us, then, by gathering up what is revealed to us in this and the following chapters, and framing them together into one harmonious whole, get before our minds a clear idea of the celestial country which John saw. I will give only the general outlines. The details will be left till I have occasion to explain them. .

First of all, there was a wide extended plain, beautiful beyond comparison. A gentle river, called the River of the Water of Life, flowed through it. Branching trees, covered with all kinds of fruit, and with leaves for the healing of the nations, lined its banks with their grateful shade. There was a sea whose crystal waves, never ruffled by storm or tempest, forever reflected back the glory of the surrounding shores. In the midst of this plain, just where the river of life bubbled up from the celestial earth, a throne was placed on which sat the Majesty of Heaven, and around which were gathered his worshipers and servants. Not far distant is a temple, builded, but not with earthly hands, after the similitude of Solomon's temple. Here and there we catch glimpses of the angels as they hurry through the heavenly country, doing the will of their God, or as they return from earth to report their missions fulfilled. Away in the distance is a mountain, the mountain of the heavenly Zion, crowned by the New Jerusalem with its walls of jasper, and gates of pearl, and streets of gold, and palaces of radiant beauty. And then, far below the plain on which the apostle stood, spread out like a map, was this world of ours, whose history is to be described in the visions. All this plain, and city, and temple were illuminated, not by a candle or by the sun, for the glory of God did lighten them, and the Lamb was their light. This is a brief and imperfect sketch of what

John saw. Let us get it firmly fixed in our minds, for we will have occasion to refer to it again and again, as we fill it up with the necessary details; and unless we bear it in mind, we will have a dim and indistinct impression of what the apostle saw and heard.

When John, in the Spirit, passed through the open door of heaven and stood on this extended plain, the first thing which claimed his attention, and which he was moved to describe, was the great throne of heaven: "Behold, a throne was set in heaven." The question may present itself here, do the throne and its surroundings, afterwards to be described, represent the ordinary employments and appearance of heaven? Or do they represent something extraordinary? I have no doubt they represent the latter. Earthly kings sometimes gather their servants and councillors about them to consult and decide concerning important affairs of state. This seems to be the figure here. The King of kings and the Lord of lords has taken his seat upon his royal throne; he has summoned the princes of heaven to meet with him, and they have taken their places on their appropriate seats. They are in consultation as to the best way in which to punish sinners and to bring about the final glory of the redeemed in accordance with the divine plan. This is the key which unlocks the meaning of that wonderful assembly which is about to be described.

The throne which John saw was not a vacant one. One sat upon it, but that one the apostle, with true reverence, does not undertake to describe. It was Jehovah himself; and his glory can neither be seen by human eye nor be described in human language. The apostle tells us only that he who sat upon the throne "was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone." Jasper is the name of a precious stone often mentioned in the Scriptures; it was one of the twelve stones inserted in the high priest's breast-plate; it is the first of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. The characteristics of this stone, as they are specified in the Scriptures, are that it is "most precious," and "like crystal." That is, it is brilliant and transparent. The stone which is now known by this name does not accord with this description. It is opaque, and of a red, yellow or green hue. In no respect does it resemble the jasper of the Bible. It has therefore been thought that the diamond is meant, for this fully answers the description; and unless this beautiful and valuable stone is described by the name of jasper, it has no place in the visions of John. The sardine or sardius, or sardony, for it is called by all these names, is also a precious stone frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. Its modern name is sard. It was one of the stones in the breast-plate of the high priest; it was the sixth of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem; it is a superior variety of the agate, and different specimens differ widely in color. In ancient days there was a bright red variety which was most esteemed, and it is supposed that this is the variety which is referred to in the words



under consideration. He who sat upon the throne was in appearance like the jasper and the sardius; that is, his appearance had the brilliancy of the diamond, mingled with the bright red of the sard. In other words, he had the appearance of a mighty prince, clothed in brilliant purple robes of state. From this description we cannot reach any definite conception of the likeness of him who sat upon the throne; nor is it intended that we should. Jehovah is beyond our conceptions, and it is profane for us to go beyond the mysterious indefiniteness of inspiration. But it must be remembered that from him who sat upon the throne, and who was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, there beamed forth an unchanging light which illuminated the heavenly land.

The terrible majesty of him who sat upon the throne was relieved and softened by the overarching bow of promise, in which, as in every rainbow which spans the natural heavens, green seemed to predominate. "There was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald." The emerald, like the other precious stones which have just been described, was one of the precious stones in the high priest's breast-plate, and one of the foundations of the New Jerusalem. Its appearance need not be described, for it is familiar to us all. Nor need we describe the rainbow, that thing woven out of rain drops and sunbeams, for there is not one of us who has not looked upon it and been enraptured with its beauty. The rainbow has always been, from its nature as well as from its associations, an emblem of peace. It appears in the heaven when the violence of the storm has passed; when the rain is ceasing; when the newly watered earth puts on its brightest robes, and when the sun unveils its face. It is a sure pledge that the tempest is over, that the war of the elements has ceased, and that God is again smiling on the earth. But it is its associations which especially make it the emblem of peace. It reminds us of Noah, standing upon the summit of Ararat; it reminds us of the covenant when God set his bow in the cloud and promised that he would never again destroy the earth with a flood. The rainbow overarching the throne was a beautiful emblem of the mercy of God, and of the unbroken peace which ever reigns in heaven. It is true, there were thunderings and lightnings, but the bow perpetually bending over all, gave promise of a mercy and a peace which should never end.

III. We were to speak of THE FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS. "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." These four and twenty elders, whoever they were, occupied thrones in heaven, for the same word is used in the original to describe their seats which is used to describe the great central throne, though our translators have rendered it by a different word. Of

course, these thrones did not equal in dignity and majesty the throne of Jehovah, but still they were thrones, and those who sat upon them were kings. But who were the four and twenty elders? They were not angels. They were men, purchased by the blood of Christ; for in their song of praise they expressly say, "thou hast redeemed us." They were not individual men, but representatives of great multitudes, for it is absurd to suppose that there are only twenty-four redeemed ones; and in the song of praise to which I have referred, they say, "thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." We are, therefore, brought to the conclusion that they are representatives of the glorified church, of the saints whom God had already brought to heaven; just as the four beasts, as I will try to show in another lecture, are the representatives of the church militant, of the saints who are yet fighting the battles of God and doing his will on the earth.

These elders are four and twenty in number. We may suppose, from the brief description here given, that their thrones were arranged in a semi-circle, twelve on one side of the great central throne, and twelve on the other. In my last lecture, I said that twelve was the number of final completeness. Therefore these elders, arranged by twelves and in number twelve twice told, would show that those whom they represented were complete in glory. These persons are called "elders," not so much because they occupy the position of rulers, as because they are the eldest of the children of God, the first born in his celestial home. It was theirs to enjoy the heavenly reward a little longer than their brethren who yet remained on the earth. These elders were clothed in white raiment. This shows their purity, their complete sanctification, and their entire freedom from all the pollutions which sometimes stain the garments of the earthly saints. They had on their heads crowns of gold. These golden crowns, as well as the thrones on which they were sitting, show that they have the kingly honor of reigning with Christ. And this we learn, not only from their symbolical crowns and thrones, but also from that song which they sing, "thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." It is to be observed that these elders, the representatives of the glorified church, sat unmoved upon their thrones, though out of the great central throne proceeded thunderings and lightnings. They knew that while for others there might be wrath, indignation, anguish and death, for them there was joy, peace, love and mercy forever and ever.

We can proceed no further in our exposition of the heavenly vision in our present lecture, but let us lay the foundation for future expositions by fixing in our memory the points we have already attained. By continued

meditation let us gain as clear an idea as we can of the celestial scenery, of the great white throne and its occupant, and its overarching bow, and of the four and twenty kings, with their shining apparel and their golden crowns, who are the elders in the church of the first born and the representatives of all the glorified. And for our encouragement we will do well to remember that these things, though they are strange to us now, and here, will before very long become part of our daily experiences. Heaven is but a little way from earth. Some of these days or nights, if we are the sons of the highest, a door will be opened in heaven and we will hear a voice saying unto us, come up hither and I will show thee the things which God has in reserve for them that love him. Of course,—need I say it?—this glory is only for those who in life are reconciled to God through the atonement of Christ. Are you thus reconciled? God grant, when that time comes, and we hear the voice and enter the open door, we may, with the four and twenty elders, cast our crowns before the throne and cry, “thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.”

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## LECTURE XIII.

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### THE VISION OF HEAVEN—CONTINUED.

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices : and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal : and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him ; and they were full of eyes within : and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power : for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.—REV. 4 : 5-11.

IN our last lecture, we made some progress in explaining the apostle's introductory vision. In spirit, we entered with him into the open door of heaven, and stood in the midst of the celestial scenery, whose outlines we briefly sketched. We are now to continue our explanations. In the subject of the present lecture, the following points are brought out, and we will discuss them in their order : the lightnings and the thunderings and the voices which proceeded from the throne ; the seven lamps before the

throne; the sea of glass; the four living ones; and the heavenly worship. While we discuss these points, let us not forget that they do not stand alone; they are intimately connected with what goes before and with what follows.

I. The apostle tells us that out of the throne of him who was in appearance like a mighty prince, clothed in his brilliant and purple robes of state, there "proceeded LIGHTNINGS AND THUNDERINGS AND VOICES." The throne on which Jehovah sat was not his throne of grace, which we can always approach with holy boldness, for from it no angry thunderings are ever heard to issue; it was a throne of judgment, from which indignation and destruction would go forth upon the enemies of the church. It is true, judgment would be mingled with mercy, for while lightnings and thunderings and voices proceeded from the throne, that throne was evermore encircled by the bow of promise, which is the emblem of peace. We are reminded here of what the children of Israel saw and heard when they stood at the foot of smoking Sinai. "It came to pass on the third day in the morning," so the inspired narrative reads, "that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." But it is to be observed that the four and twenty representatives of the glorified church did not tremble, though they stood close to the place whence these mighty manifestations of the divine power were ever issuing. They had been redeemed to God by the death of his Son, and that redemption covered them like a shield. If we have been reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we need not fear any of the judgments which are pronounced in this book, for "we are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words. \* \* \* But unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven."

II. The next thing which the apostle was moved to mention was THE SEVEN LAMPS which were burning before the throne. "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Where these lamps were placed, or how they were arranged, except that it was before the throne, we do not know. In forming a mental picture of the vision, we may place them in any order, for the order does not seem to be material, or it would have been revealed. But we are at no loss to know what is signified by these lamps, for their signification is explained. It seems as if the author of the Revelation thought we

might confuse these lamps with the seven candlesticks of a former vision, which represented the church on the earth : and therefore he tells us that they are "the seven Spirits of God." It is hardly necessary to say that this is a description of the Holy Ghost. He is compared to a lamp because his great work, in the divine plan of redemption, is to enlighten the heart and the world. These lamps are before the throne, for the Spirit proceeds from the Father. These lamps are ever burning, for the Spirit's work is unceasing ; he is ever as a light burning in a dark place. These lamps are seven in number, for seven is the number of gracious completeness and perfection ; they, therefore, shadow forth the plenitude of the Spirit's manifold operations. This description calls to memory John's introductory salutation in chapter I. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." In the vision we are now considering, two of the three persons of the adorable Trinity are revealed. The Father is sitting upon the throne ; the Holy Ghost is burning before the throne. In the next chapter, the Lord Jesus Christ will appear under the emblem of a lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

III. The next thing of which the apostle was moved to speak was THE SEA OF GLASS. "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." These words describe the plain or pavement, on which the throne of God and the seats of the elders were placed. This is evident from parallel passages. When Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders went up into Mount Sinai, "they saw the God of Israel ; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." In the vision of Ezekiel, the plain on which the throne of God rested was the "likeness of the firmament, as the color of the terrible crystal." These passages mutually explain each other. The throne of God, and all surrounding it and connected with it, stood upon a plain which resembled a wide sea, solid, transparent, and full of inexpressible beauty and splendor. The beautiful clearness and transparency of this plain is represented by a three-fold comparison. It was like a sea ; it was like a sea of glass ; it was like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. This sea-like plain is said to be before the throne, because this was the only part of it which came within the range of the apostle's vision. A spectator, standing in front, as John is represented as standing, could see only that part of the celestial plain which was before the throne, and which was within the semi-circle of the four and twenty seats ; but we have reason to believe that the whole of the heavenly landscape, and not this portion alone, was "a sea of glass like unto crystal."

IV. The next thing of which the apostle was moved to speak was **THE FOUR BEASTS**. "And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." The translation here is an unfortunate one. The word "beasts" conveys to us the idea of wild beasts or monsters, and in subsequent chapters of this book, beasts of this character are described; but the Greek word used to describe them is not the same word which is here employed. The word here used literally means living creatures. It is indeed applied to animals, but it is always applied to them to express the idea that they have life. When this term is used, this idea should be kept in prominent view. I will therefore uniformly speak of the four which John saw, not as beasts, but as living ones.

The position of these living creatures with reference to the throne is not very clearly expressed. They are said to be "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne." But remembering that John's imagery is largely drawn from the Old Testament, a reference to the Old Testament will perhaps help us here. We know that the thrones of the Jewish kings were supported by carved images. We have a minute description of Solomon's throne, around which twelve lions stood. The description in the words we are now considering seems to point to a similar arrangement. The throne of God rested not on carved lions, as the throne of Solomon did, but on these four living creatures. Their faces, each one differing from the others, were outward, while their bodies were underneath the throne and supported it. This explanation makes plain the words which describe the position of the living creatures. They were "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne." These four living ones in John's vision are drawn partly from Isaiah's vision, and partly from Ezekiel's. From Ezekiel's vision, we have their number, their name and their appearance; from Isaiah's vision, we have their wings and their song.

But what is represented by these four living ones? This is a question which has been answered in so many ways that the mind is bewildered as it attempts to recall them. Some say that they are the four evangelists; others, that they are the four dispensations; others, that they are the four cardinal virtues of the saints; others, that they are four great nations of the world; others, that they are four great systems of religion; others, that they are God's providential forces by which he governs the world; others, that they are mere angels. And these are only some of the theories which have been advanced. Which of these theories shall we adopt? Or shall we reject them all? What is represented by these four living ones? Will the similar visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel give us any assistance in answering this question? The seraphim that Isaiah saw, were undoubtedly holy and unfallen angels; the living creatures that Ezekiel saw, were in

all probability God's providential forces; but the living ones of John's vision were neither unfallen angels nor providential forces, because in their song of praise recorded in the next chapter, they refer with thankful hearts to their redemption through the blood of Jesus. The angels were never redeemed, for they needed no redemption; and it is the height of absurdity to speak of providential forces or of an abstract idea as being redeemed by the blood of Christ. The visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel will not, then, help us in determining who are meant by the four living ones. This vision of John stands by itself, and it is only by studying all its various parts that we can reach a correct conclusion.

The first and most obvious thing is this: the living ones represent men, for none but men can sing the song they sang, "thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." This seems so obvious, that no statement or argument can make it plainer. This shows at once that there can be no truth in those theories which make the living creatures to represent angels, or providential forces, or cardinal virtues, or religious systems, or abstract ideas, for all these are outside the province of redemption. Another thing which is obvious is, that the living creatures represent redeemed men. This shows that there can be no truth in those theories which make the living creatures represent nations or political powers. And these living creatures were four. I had occasion to say in a former lecture, that four was in Scripture the worldly number. If this is correct, then the four living creatures would represent the redeemed men who were then on the earth. In other words, they would be the representatives of the earthly church, just as the four and twenty elders were the representatives of the glorified church.

But let us see how this hypothesis will agree with the other parts of the vision. The living creatures, as we have seen, were upholding the throne of God. This is the province of the earthly church. This world of ours is a stage on which the glorious attributes of the Godhead are exhibited. This is not an idle dream, but a matter of plain revelation; for Paul says, "to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"; that is, the church in its redemption reveals to all the universe the love, the mercy, the power, the justice, the faithfulness and all the manifold attributes of God. And what is this but upholding the throne of God? What is this but lifting up the Majesty of heaven that he may receive the homage of all? This will appear more evident when we compare the attitude of the four and twenty elders with that of the four living creatures. The former had finished the work which had been given them to do and they were resting in heaven; while the latter were yet actively engaged in supporting the throne; that is, they were actively engaged in making known and exalting the declarative glory of God.

The four living creatures were "full of eyes." They looked in all directions, and were unceasing in their watchfulness. This is descriptive of the church militant. It looks backward, and rejoices in the glorious things which are written in its past history; it looks forward, and rejoices in the more glorious things which are yet to be; it watches on every hand for opportunities for doing good and glorifying God. All this is represented by the many eyes of the living creatures.

The living creatures did not all have the same appearance. "And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." It is probable, from this brief description, that their bodies, which were underneath the throne and supported it, were alike, and that the only difference was in their faces, which looked outward. This difference, whether suggested by the standards carried by the four divisions of the army of Israel, or by the four natural divisions in the animate creation, describes the chief characteristics of the earthly church. The lion is the emblem of boldness; and the church militant is bold. It stands unmoved in the presence of enemies and dangers; it goes wherever duty calls it to go; its voice makes thrones, and dominions, and systems of iniquity to tremble. The church is as bold as a lion. The calf, or rather the young ox, for this is the exact translation of the original word, is the emblem of patient endurance. And the church has patiently borne every yoke the Master has laid upon its neck. It has endured labor, persecution and poverty. The human countenance is the emblem of intelligence and authority. And the church, in all its activity, has manifested a wisdom which is more than human. When it speaks, like its divine Master, it speaks as one having authority. The eagle is the emblem of rapid and untiring exertion. And the church has been quick to respond to the commands of its Lord, and untiring in its obedience. Every one who is acquainted with the history of redemption must see that the courage, and the patience, and the intelligence, and the untiring zeal of the earthly church is beautifully represented by the four living creatures, which had the appearance of the courageous lion, and the patient ox, and the intelligent human countenance, and the flying eagle.

Each one of these living creatures had six wings. "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within." The six wings, teeming with eyes, are but an emphatic repetition of the idea already expressed and explained. The six wings represent the untiring activity which is also represented by the flying eagle. The untiring activity of the earthly church in the service of God is brought once more to our notice in the unceasing worship of the living creatures. "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Their worship is given



to the Lord God Almighty, who is described as past, present, and to come. These words express the self-existence and unchangeableness of God. They are in fact identical with that revelation which was made to Moses; "I am that I am." They are but a translation of the mysterious name, Jehovah. To this Jehovah, who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, holiness is ascribed. The repetition of a word is a common Hebrew idiom to denote great emphasis. Therefore the word "holy," three times repeated, would mean "thrice holy," or "very holy." It may also point to the mystery of the Trinity. But it is worthy of remark that in the Sinaitic manuscript, one of the most ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, the word "holy" is repeated eight times, instead of three times, as in our version. And this is the ascription of praise which is ever going up from the earthly church. In different languages, spoken by different persons, in different places, it is continually ascending to heaven. The voice of praise follows the sun in his ceaseless course around the world. While we sleep, others are worshiping; and we worship while others sleep. When we remember that Christians are to be found in every country under the whole heaven, and that they are offering praises and prayers in the closet, at the family altar, in the social meeting and in the public assembly, not in our own city alone, but in every city, town and hamlet, we can see that these words do describe, beautifully and truthfully, the attitude of the earthly church: "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

V. We have a description of THE HEAVENLY WORSHIP. Verses 9-11. In these words we have, in the first place, the object of the heavenly worship. It is said "to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever." In the second place, we have the subject matter of the heavenly worship. It ascribes "glory" to God, for he has a name which is above every name; it ascribes "honor" to God, for to him every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess; it ascribes "thanks" to God, for he has bestowed upon the inhabitants of heaven all that fullness of joy which prompts their unending worship. In the third place, we have the worshipers, viz., the four living ones and the four and twenty elders, the former representing the church militant, the latter the church glorified. It is worthy of special note, that the earthly church is the leader in this worship. It is as if the glorified saints ever wait till the battling ones on earth begin the song. Whenever they experience a great deliverance, or win a great victory, or have a great manifestation of the divine love, and begin their praise, then those who have already entered heaven join in the song. What an honor is ours! Without us, the saints in heaven are not made perfect. In the fourth place, we have the attitude of the worshipers. "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that

liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne," because they owe all their past triumphs, and all their present glory, to him whom they worship. In the fifth place, we have the song they sing. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." This song requires little explanation, for the thoughts contained in it are familiar to us all. God has created all things for his pleasure, and for his pleasure they are sustained in being; therefore he is worthy to have all glory, and honor, and power ascribed to him by all his intelligent creatures forever and ever.

I cannot conclude this lecture without calling your attention to the fact which is so prominently brought to view, that the church in heaven and the church on earth are one. They have the same God and the same Saviour; their representatives stand beside the same throne and join in the same worship. Surely, then, we have no right to expect to belong to the former, unless we first belong to the latter. The church visible is the only door through which, in ordinary circumstances, we can enter the church glorified. If, therefore, you have any desire to enter the church in heaven, I commend to your serious consideration the claims of the church on earth. Is there any one who is so indifferent to his own happiness, and to a place at God's right hand, that he is willing to cast away the golden opportunity of the present as a useless thing? I put it to your consciences, if you can hope for clemency hereafter, when you despise the privileges now within your reach, and neglect the invitations which you so often hear? By the golden crowns and spotless robes of the future, by your own longings for happiness, by the love with which the Saviour has loved us, I charge you to give heed to these things, and by earnest faith and holy living begin the communion with the church which will never be broken, and the song of redemption which will never end.

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## LECTURE XIV.

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### THE SEALED BOOK.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of

the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.—*REV. 5: 1-7.*

WE are to enter once more into the council of heaven. As we listen to the sublime revelations which are to be made, let us not forget that the scene already described remains unchanged. The celestial landscape, whose outlines were briefly sketched, with its river and tree of life, its magnificent temple, its mountain, whose summit is adorned with the New Jerusalem, and its multitudes of busy angels, is unaltered. In the immediate foreground, there is the central throne, from which proceed the thunders and lightnings, and over which arches the rainbow, the emblem of perpetual peace. We see the thrones of the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the glorified church; we see the four living ones, the representatives of the earthly church, supporting the throne of God. We stand upon the heavenly plain, as it were the paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were a sea of glass clear as crystal. But beautiful as the scene is, our human and sinful hearts are not satisfied. There is something lacking, something for which every ransomed soul must long with unutterable longings. Our Redeemer is not there, and heaven itself would be no heaven without his presence. The Father, to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, is sitting upon the throne; the Spirit is burning before the throne; but where is the Son, who is the express image of the Father's presence, and the brightness of the Father's glory, and to whom the Spirit has been given without measure? In this chapter, he is about to be introduced to our notice and to receive the worship of the universe, a chapter of unparalleled beauty and sublimity, which should be studied with reverent hearts. Let us, then, with awe and thankfulness, enter upon the consideration of the verses before us. In these verses there are these points, which I will discuss in their order: the sealed book, the weeping apostle, and the slain lamb.

I. We are to consider **THE SEALED BOOK**. "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals." This book was in the form of a roll, for in those days books were not bound as they are now. We are so familiar with the present form, that it is no easy matter by mere words, without the help of engravings, to give a correct idea of the ancient roll. Perhaps there is no need to attempt a description, for there are few of us who have not seen pictures of rolls of various kinds, or it may be the rolls themselves. It may, however, be stated that the parchment was prepared in a long strip, and then rolled up after the fashion of a roll of wall paper. There was a small wooden roller at each end of the strip, and the reader unrolled the parchment from the lower roller, and rolled it on the upper. We must re-

member that the book which John saw was in this form, or we will not reach a clear conception of the subsequent vision, in which the book occupies such a prominent place.

This roll was in the right hand of him who sat upon the throne. The reference is, of course, not to the seats of the elders, but to the great central throne and to its occupant, who was in appearance like a mighty prince, clothed in his brilliant and purple robes of state. Whatever, then, the roll represents, it was the property of God and in the power of God; no one could take it without his permission, for he is the Almighty one; no one could hope to know its contents against his will, for his right hand is stronger than all his foes.

The roll was written within and without. This was very unusual. The ancient roll was generally written only on the one side. It was only when writing materials were scarce, or when the writing extended to a greater length than was expected, or when something additional had to be added after the roll was finished, that there was anything written on the other side. However, this roll contained so many important matters, that it was written within and without. It reminds us of the two tables of the law received by Moses on the mount, which were "written on both sides; on the one side and on the other were they written." It reminds us also of the roll of the book which Ezekiel saw. "It was written within and without, and there was written therein lamentations, mourning and woe." In the present instance John could not see that there was writing within, but he could see that there was writing on the outside, and he supposed, as a matter of course, that there was writing on the inside; and when it was afterwards unrolled, he saw that this was actually the case.

The roll was sealed with seven seals. This was an unusual number. One seal was all that was necessary to keep the contents of a book from being read. But this roll was sealed with seven seals to show that its contents were perfectly hidden from the eyes of men. How these seals were arranged has not been revealed, nor is it a matter of great importance. However, these two things seem to be plain, from the brief description which has been given us: the seals were so placed that they could all be seen, for John no sooner saw the roll than he saw the seals by which it was fastened; and the seals were not all arranged along the end of the rolled parchment, for then all the seals would have to be broken before any of the book could be unrolled. It seems, from the subsequent chapters, that when one seal was broken a portion of the book was unrolled; when another seal was broken another portion was unrolled, and so on till all the seals were broken and all the contents of the book were exposed. The following arrangement may be suggested as probable: The seals were placed upon the ends of the roll. When a portion of the roll was rolled up a seal was placed upon the end, perhaps by a projecting tab; another portion was rolled up, and another

seal was affixed, and so on till the whole was rolled up, when the seventh and last seal was affixed. With this arrangement, when the outermost seal was broken, the book could be unrolled only till the next seal was reached; and the breaking of each seal would permit the unrolling of the book till the next seal was reached. Whether this was the exact arrangement or not, it is evident that all the seals could be seen at once, and that the breaking of each successive seal allowed only a portion of the book to be read.

While John was looking at the roll he heard "a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof"? It is manifest that no one could declare the contents of this book, who did not have power to break its seals and ability to read it after the seals were broken. Therefore, the proclamation of the angel has reference to both these things. It is also manifest that this angel was an appointed herald, and that he spake by authority. He was a strong angel, for his voice was to sound through all the heavens and through all the earth, to see if there was any one who had the requisite power and qualifications to reveal the secrets of the right hand of God. This is the first angelic being we have seen in the mysterious gathering around the throne, though before the vision is ended we will see multitudes of the heavenly host; and wherever we see them we will find them actively engaged in doing the will of their divine Master; and our endeavor, as well as our prayer, should be to do God's will as the angels do in heaven.

The angel's proclamation called forth no reply. "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth,"—that is, in any part of God's universal dominion—"was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." Of course the Lamb is excepted, for the apostle had not as yet seen him. The four living ones were silent, for they could not open the seals and read the book; the four and twenty elders were silent, for it was not theirs to touch the sealed roll; the holy angels were silent, for it was not given to them to unfold the future; the inhabitants of earth were silent, for they were unable to read the hidden things of God. The angel's proclamation called forth no response. Perfect silence reigned in the universe. It seemed as if the seals must ever remain unbroken, and the contents of the book, however important, must ever remain unknown.

II. We must now turn, in the second place, to notice **THE WEEPING APOSTLE**. "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." Though our translation confines the inability to open the book to men, the original does not so confine it. It asserts that no one, whether man, or angel, or devil, was able to open the book. And though our translation asserts that no one was able to look thereon—that is, on the book—this is manifestly incorrect, for John did look thereon. The meaning is, that no one was able to look therein.

The reason of the apostle's weeping is obvious. He knew the prophetic significance of the sealed roll. He knew that it signified that the things written therein must remain unknown till some one was found who was able to break the seals. He knew also to what the things written in the roll had reference, for he had been twice informed that he was to hear the things which were to be thereafter. He therefore knew that the sealed book contained the future history of the church. He longed to know what that future history should be. Would it be a history of continual defeat, persecution, punishment and bloodshed? Or would it be a record of glorious triumphs? In order to understand the keenness of the apostle's sorrow, we must remember the anguish through which the church was passing, and which seemed, to the weakness of human faith, without an end. Some one has well said, "The words, 'I wept much' can only be understood by those who have lived in the great catastrophes of the church, and who have entered with fullest sympathy into her sufferings. Without tears, the book of the Revelation was not written; neither can it, without tears, be understood." John's sorrow did not, therefore, arise merely from disappointed curiosity. It had a far deeper and tenderer origin. It arose from the thought that the comfort and the strength which would be imparted by a knowledge of the future seemed forever beyond his reach. He thought of the persecuted Christians, and of the consolations which would fill their lives if they could only know what was written in that sealed roll; and when he listened for one to make reply to the angel's proclamation, and the deep silence remained unbroken, it was too much for the loving John, and his bitter tears dropped upon the sapphire pavement of heaven. He wept much. His silent tears—an unwonted spectacle in that land, from which all sorrow is excluded, and in which God wipes away all tears from all faces—were not unnoticed. A comforter was near at hand with the sweetest consolations. The seals were to be broken, the contents of the roll were to be read, and John was to be the messenger of consolation to the church in every age and in every land.

III. This comforter points the weeping apostle to THE SLAIN LAMB, who was able to open the book and loose its seals. This brings us to the third division of the present lecture, which is contained in verses 5-7. This comforter was one of the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the glorified church. Perhaps we might expect that an angel would be sent on this errand, for it is similar to the errands on which angels have been sent on other occasions; but there is a manifest propriety in one of the four and twenty elders performing this duty. The members of the glorified church have not forgotten the sorrows and the longings of their earthly existence, and therefore they are better able to sympathize with their brethren on the earth than any angel could be. And the members of the glorified church

have a more extended knowledge of God and the plan of salvation and the ability of the Saviour, than the members of the church militant. Therefore, there is a manifest propriety that a representative of the glorified church should comfort the weeping apostle.

The elder comforts John by informing him that though there had not as yet been any response to the angelic proclamation, there was one who was able to open the book and read its contents. This one he describes as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." The reference is to the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and though this is the only place in the Scriptures in which he is called by this name, its propriety is obvious. The lion is the emblem of strength, and Jesus is mighty to save; the lion is the emblem of courage, and Jesus dared to meet the hosts of Satan and of darkness; the lion is the emblem of majesty, and Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus is also the Lion "of the tribe of Judah," for as Paul tells us, "it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah." This was the tribe to which he belonged according to the flesh. There is here a probable reference to the traditional fact that the standard of the armies of Judah in the march through the wilderness was a lion; and there is, without doubt, a reference to the prophetic blessing which Jacob pronounced upon that tribe; "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"

The elder also describes the one who was able to open and read the book as "the root of David"; not the root from which David sprung, but the root-shoot which sprung from David. That our Lord was a descendant of David is plainly revealed, and as he was a descendant of David, he was the heir of David's throne. Therefore, he of whom the elder spake was of the tribe of which it had been predicted that the Shiloh should come; he was also of the predicted family, for it had been foretold that David should not be without a son to sit on his throne forever.

Of course we are not to suppose that Jesus appeared in the form of a lion, or of a tree springing from the root of David. The elder does not say that he appeared in this form, nor does John say that he saw him under this form. Such an appearance would not be in harmony with the rest of the vision. The elder is describing the one who was able to open and to read the book as a mighty and legitimate king, but instead of putting his description in literal language, he uses highly figurative words, which no one acquainted with the Scriptures can misunderstand.

The elder still further describes the Saviour as one who has "prevailed," or conquered. He had indeed passed through a mighty struggle. Men and devils were arrayed against him; and for a time, in the midst of the hour and power of darkness the issue of the conflict, to human eyes, seemed doubtful, but at last he conquered. All his enemies were put under his feet. As a

result of this victory, the way was prepared for the future triumph and glory of the church. It was in consequence of this victory, that he was able to read the book which contained the history of the church in all the ages yet to be. Hence the propriety of the elder's language, "the lion of the tribe of Judah and the root of David hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof," language which shows the intimate connection there is between the Saviour's victory in the work of redemption, and the things revealed in this book which pertain to the glorious triumphs of the redeemed.

These words of the elder comforted the apostle and dried his tears. He looked, and lo, a new personage had appeared in the heavenly council. He saw "in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders \* \* \* a Lamb as it had been slain." This Lamb had on it marks of recent slaughter. It may be that there were manifest wounds on its body, or that it was stained with blood. In some way it showed that it had been slain, though it was now alive. John could have had no difficulty in determining who was meant by this symbol, for it must have recalled to his memory the time when the newly risen Saviour appeared in the midst of the disciples and showed them the print of the nails in his hands and the wound of the spear in his side. And does not the form in which the Saviour appears in this vision, the form of a lamb slain, reveal one way in which he makes intercession for his people? Does it not hint that he exhibits his wounds before the throne as a plea in behalf of those for whom these wounds were inflicted? The language of symbols seems to labor to express the greatness of him who stood in the midst of the heavenly congregation. He was a Lamb; he was a Lamb slain; he had "seven horns." A horn has been universally recognized as a symbol of power. And as seven is the number of perfection, the seven horns would be a symbol of perfect power. The Lamb had also "seven eyes," which are explained as "the seven Spirits of God." The eye is an emblem of all-seeing intelligence. The seven eyes would be an emblem of perfect intelligence. This describes the Holy Ghost, for no one can go beyond his reach. He is sent, according to the Saviour's promise before his death, into all the world to perform his manifold operations in converting, illumining and sanctifying the souls of men. When these emblems are connected with the Lamb in the midst of the heavenly congregation, the meaning is that the Saviour has all power, and that the Spirit has been given to him without measure. He therefore is able to open the roll and to read the secret things of God.

And he is not only able, he is also willing. "He came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." There seems to be something incongruous in that a lamb should take and open and read the book; but he is described as a lamb to shadow forth in figurative



language his character and work. Thus the Baptist said of him at the beginning of his earthly ministry, "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Thus Isaiah says, "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Thus Paul says, "Christ our passover," that is, our pass-over lamb, "is sacrificed for us." And throughout this book, this name is often applied to him who, by one sacrifice of himself, perfected forever them that are sanctified.

When this Lamb approached the throne, and took the roll from him who sat thereon, a thrill of joy went through the heavenly congregation, and with one accord they began their heavenly worship. The description of this worshiping congregation and their worship must be reserved for future consideration.

## LECTURE XV.

### THE HEAVENLY WORSHIP.

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.—REV. 5: 8-14.

ALL things remain as they were described in the previous lectures. When the slain Lamb took the book from the hand of heaven's King, a thrill of joy ran through all the created universe. The four and twenty elders, and the four living ones, the representatives of the church in heaven and on earth, sang a song of praise, which celebrates the power and love of the Lamb in the redemption of his people, and which must move the heart of every one who reads it. No sooner did this song cease, than myriads of unnumbered and innumerable angels unite in another song of praise to him who was slain. When this anthem died away, a still grander song is heard, in which the whole created universe takes a part, for

every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea was heard saying in unison, "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." And then, as was fitting, the four living ones cry "amen" to this universal worship, and the four and twenty elders fall down in silent adoration before the throne. We have, therefore, in the subject of the present lecture three doxologies, viz., the doxology of the church, the doxology of the angels, and the doxology of the universe.

I. THE DOXOLOGY OF THE CHURCH is contained in these words: "and when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb; having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." A doxology is a formal ascription of praise, which is used in divine worship. In considering this sublime doxology of the church, and the two equally sublime ones which follow it, I feel that I must come far short of your expectations, and still further short of the truth. They are so exalted that human speech is baffled in attempting to explain them; but their different parts must be explained in order to a right appreciation of the entire song.

The occasion of this doxology was the Lamb's taking the book from the hand of God. It seemed as if the future history of the church must forever remain unknown, for no one could open and read the roll in which it was written; but when the Lamb came and made known his ability and willingness to reveal its contents, it is no wonder that the church rejoiced.

This doxology was by the four living ones, the representatives of the earthly church, and the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the heavenly church. It is a doxology which falls from the lips and stirs the hearts of all the redeemed. We are told that each one of these worshipers had a "harp." The harp was a well known musical instrument, which was extensively used in the old dispensation in the worship of God. Each of these worshipers had also a "golden vial, full of odors," or rather, as the word is rendered in the margin of our Bibles, "full of incense." The word "vial" with us denotes a small bottle with a narrow neck. It is evident that such a vessel would not be appropriate for offering incense. The word bowl or vase would better express the idea. And it is to be remembered that this is the meaning of the word "vial" every where in the book of the Revelation. The incense with which these vials were filled is described as "the prayers of the saints." This is no new

figure of speech. Years before, the Psalmist had used it when he said, "let my prayers be set before thee as incense." This figure is an appropriate one. As incense produces a grateful fragrance, so prayer is acceptable in the sight of God. As incense floats lightly upward through the air, so prayer ascends to the eternal throne. The worship, then, of this congregation consists partly in praise, which is indicated by the harp which each worshiper holds in his hand, and by the song they are afterwards described as singing; and partly in prayer, which is indicated by the incense which they offer. I must call special attention to the fact, that the members of the glorified church still perform the duty and enjoy the privilege of prayer, which they learned to perform and enjoy when they were yet on earth. This is a truth which is taught elsewhere in this book, for we are told that the souls of the martyrs under the altar are ever praying for their persecuted brethren on earth. It is for our comfort to remember that our Christian friends who have gone to heaven have not forgotten how to pray, and that those who remembered us in their petitions on earth will still remember us in their petitions when they have a nearer access to the throne of God. This passage gives no countenance to the heresy that there are human intercessors around the heavenly throne. There is but one mediator between God and man. Though our departed friends may pray for us, this is no reason why we should pray to them, for we did not pray to them when on earth they made supplication in our behalf.

We have now clearly brought before us this heavenly congregation. It is composed of all the redeemed in heaven and on earth, represented by the four living ones and the four and twenty elders. They bow themselves in love and wonder before the throne, and in prayer and praise worship him who liveth for ever and ever. Let us proceed to consider the song which they sing. It is said to be "a new song." It does not celebrate the glories of creation. Such a song would not be new in heaven, for it has been sung there ever since the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. It celebrates the glories of redemption, and therefore it differs from all the songs which were sung in heaven before the work of redemption was consummated. It strikes notes which were never struck before; it reveals traits of the divine character and depths in the divine love which would have been unknown if it had not been for redemption.

In their new song, they celebrate the worthiness of him who could take the book and open its seals. Every voice utters its sweetest notes; all the golden harps sound in unison; the incense of every censer floats before the throne. But wherein consists the worthiness of him they worship? In other words, why do they worship the Lamb? The reasons are assigned in the words of their song. In the first place, they worship him because he was "slain." The cross of Calvary can never be forgotten. The Sa-

viour's sufferings thereon made him the Redeemer of his people. Of course there are other grounds of worthiness and other reasons for worship. But his dying in our room and stead is the most conspicuous; and in every outburst of praise, the redeemed soul will remember, first of all, the death of Christ.

In the second place, they worship him because he had "redeemed" them. They were in bondage to Satan and he bought them from their former master; and surely it is fitting that those who have been redeemed from such a bondage and from such a master should remember their redemption in every song of praise. And they were not only redeemed from Satan, they were also redeemed "to God." They are his possession, his peculiar people, his servants and his friends. It was not their redemption alone which called forth their gratitude, but also the price which was paid, for they were redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God. Such language as is used in their song shows that the sacrifice of Christ was vicarious. Men on earth may believe and teach that Jesus died as a martyr or as an example, but the saints in heaven, who know even as they are known, know that he died in their room and stead, and that he redeemed them by his own blood. And their redemption was precious and widely extended, for they were redeemed "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." These terms show how widely the benefits of the atonement were applied. The church is called out of every kindred, that is, out of every tribe or family; out of every tongue, that is, out of every people speaking the same language; out of every people, and out of every nation. These terms are not, then, synonymous in meaning. The following example will illustrate the difference in their signification. The British nation, a phrase which includes all those who are under British government, is composed of many different tribes and families of men, speaking many different languages; and of many different peoples, as the Anglo Saxon, the Scotch, the Irish, &c. And the church, in this anthem, celebrates the fact that it has been redeemed, not from the Jews only, but from all families and nations, great and small, the world over. The blessings of redemption are not confined to a narrow circle. They have already extended to many parts of the earth, and they are to extend to more. When that great assembly which is here referred to, will be gathered, and the redeemed, all purchased by the same blood, will look back to their widely scattered homes on earth, they can say, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

In the third place, the redeemed worshiped the Lamb, not only for what he had done for them in the past, viz., for redeeming them by his blood, but also for the present honor he confers upon them. "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests." It was no empty honor to which they had been redeemed. They were kings, wearing kingly crowns and

sitting on kingly thrones ; they were priests, clothed in priestly robes and admitted to intimate communion with God. This two-fold honor the apostle Peter describes in the words, "a royal priesthood." This double honor could not but give emphasis to their song of praise. It was indeed a great blessing to be redeemed from sin, but to be made kings and priests was a blessing infinitely greater.

In the fourth place, the redeemed worshiped the Lamb because of the future honor which was in store for them. "We shall reign on the earth." It is true that the saints of God are as yet in the minority, but this is not always to be the case. The church is to increase through the appointed means, until it fills the earth, and the earth becomes a kingdom of holiness. And these words seem to point to a still more distant future. It seems probable that our world, regenerated and purified from all the effects of sin, is to be the home of God's ransomed ones. When this world, washed by the baptism of fire and made as beautiful and pure as Eden was before the fall, becomes the residence of saints alone, without any admixture of the wicked, then will this song of the church be fulfilled; for then the church will reign on the earth.

II. Having listened to the doxology of the church, let us now listen to **THE DOXOLOGY OF THE ANGELS.** "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing." No sooner had the four living ones and the four and twenty elders, whose position was near the throne, ceased their song of adoration than another song of adoration came from other worshipers, whose place was at a greater distance. Who were these other worshipers ? They were the holy angels, who kept their first estate. We have already caught glimpses of them in our previous lectures, as they were busy on the celestial plain doing the will of God ; but now for the first time they are brought into distinct vision. These holy ones, though they have no personal interest in the plan of redemption, are intensely interested in its successes, for it concerns the honor of their divine Master. Their position was beyond the circle of the four and twenty elders and the four living ones. Their number was without number. It is described as "ten thousand times ten thousand," that is, one hundred millions, and "thousands of thousands" besides. Of course, these figures are not to be understood literally, but they denote an immense multitude. This agrees with the uniform teachings of the Scriptures with regard to the number of the heavenly host. The Saviour spake of twelve legions of angels as if they were but a handful of the number he might command. Daniel says, "thousand thousands min-

istered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." The Psalmist says, "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels."

From such a congregation we might expect a sublime anthem of praise, and we are not disappointed. They ascribe to the Lamb power, that is, authority to rule over all; and riches, that is, an abundance of gifts and graces in himself for all his people; and wisdom, that is, wisdom for redeeming and governing his church and for conquering his enemies; and strength, that is, ability to accomplish his purposes; and glory, that is, the honor of complete triumph; and blessing, that is, all the worship, praise and adoration of the universe. It is to be observed that they ascribe all these things to the Lamb because he was slain, for it was through his sacrifice for sin that he reached the summit of his mediatorial honor. It was true of him as the Saviour, as it must be true of us, first the suffering, then the glory that should follow. It is also to be observed that there is a marked difference between the doxology of the church and the doxology of the angels. The latter ascribe power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing to the Lamb, but they do not ascribe their redemption to him, for the sufficient reason that they were never redeemed. No angel can say, thou hast redeemed me by thy blood. Thankful, then, as the angels should be, we should be more thankful. Grand as is the doxology of the heavenly host, the doxology of the church must be grander still, for the latter alone can speak from experience of redemption through the blood of the Lamb. And shall the redeemed from the kindreds of the earth be silent, and let the angels ascribe all the praise?

III. We are to consider THE DOXOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSE. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." When the song of the angels was finished, the whole universe took up the strain and joined in the worship. The worshipers now were not the church and the angels only, but every creature. All the inhabitants of heaven lifted up their voices in song. All the inhabitants of earth added their tribute of praise. All those who were under the earth in the regions of death, and all the living ones whose home was on or in the sea, shouted for joy. The whole universe joined in the song in which the inhabitants of heaven led. In psalm 148, the creation is called upon to praise the Lord; and in this passage the creation is described as praising the Lord. It is something more than a figure to speak of the creation as praising the goodness of its Creator. Everything praises God which fulfills the end for which it was created. The mountains and hills, the plains and forests, the birds of the

air, and the beasts of the field give glory to the hand that made them ; so do the righteous—and so do the wicked, for a tribute of praise is wrung even from their unwilling lips.

But the song which the universe sings is not the song of redemption ; it is a song similar to the doxology of the angels—a song which ascribes blessing, and honor, and glory, and power equally to the eternal Sire and his eternal Son ; for no questions about the deity of the Son are ever raised by those who stand near the heavenly throne. No discordant note is ever heard in their worship, for they know that the Lamb is God over all, blessed forever.

IV. Finally, we have THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH. “ And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever.” On this response we need not dwell. It was fitting that those who began the worship should bring it to a close. Therefore, when the doxology of the universe is ended, the four living creatures, with one accord, cry “ amen,” and the four and twenty elders fall on their faces and worship in profound adoration. The church, the angels and the universe are waiting for the opening of the mysterious roll, which is in the hand of God ; all feel an interest in it ; all feel that it contains the secret things of the future, which are known only to the Most High ; all feel that there is only one who is worthy to open this volume and to read its contents ; and feeling all this, they join in an ascription of praise to the Lamb who was slain. When this universal ascription of praise ends with the amen of the four living creatures and the worship of the four and twenty elders, they all stand in most profound reverence, waiting for the opening of the book and the revelation of the great mysteries which are written therein. Let us join that waiting congregation, and with thankful hearts and deepest adoration watch the breaking of the seals and the unfolding of the purposes of heaven.

In the conclusion of these remarks I cannot refrain from calling attention, with shame and confusion of face, to the hardness of our hearts. The glorified saints, the holy angels, and the whole created universe are ever praising God, but we are cold and indifferent in his worship. And yet we know about the Lamb slain as well as they ; we have the same story of redemption which kindles their gratitude. As we listen to the three-fold doxology of the church, of the angels, and of the universe, let us join in their worship and say with them, “ Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.”

## LECTURE XVI.

## THE FIRST SEAL.

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold, a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.—REV. 6: 1, 2.

THE Lamb has now taken the sealed book out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne. The three doxologies, of the church, of the angels, and of the universe, have been finished. The first thrill of joy, which ran through the heavenly congregation when the Lamb showed his willingness to take and read the book, has subsided. All, hushed in silent expectation, wait for the breaking of the seals. The things which were seen and heard in heaven at the breaking of the seals are described in this and the following chapters; for it must be remembered that the sounding of the seven trumpets is included under the seventh seal; and that the pouring out of the seven vials is included under the seventh trumpet. I need hardly remind you that this is the most difficult part of the book of the Revelation. Expositors differ widely in their opinions. There are comparatively few points of difference in the exposition of the five preceding chapters, but in the exposition of the chapters that follow, there are differences, endless and measureless. These differences are to be found, not in describing the symbols, but in explaining their meaning. In my lectures, I will spend but little time in quoting and refuting the theories which I believe to be incorrect; I will state as briefly and clearly as I can what I conceive to be the truth. In explaining the sublime visions which we are about to see, I will uniformly pursue this method; I will, in the first place, describe the symbol, and in the second place, I will show its meaning. The first part of this plan will be easy; the second part will be beset with difficulties. Though we may not hope always to reach the full measure of the truth, yet we may hope, through the assistance of the promised Spirit, to reach the blessing pronounced upon those who read the things which are written in this book. Let us, then, attend to the opening of the first seal.

I. We are to describe and explain THE SYMBOLS which John saw. In order to understand this explanation, we must remember the circumstances in which the apostle was placed. He stood before the throne of God, around which were the living creatures and the enthroned elders. At a greater distance was an innumerable company of angels. Far below the celestial plain, on which the throne of God was set, was our world, stretched out like a map. The Lord Jesus Christ had taken the roll from the hand



of heaven's King. When he had broken the first or outermost seal, a portion of the book could be unrolled. In the roll was written, I suppose, a description of the visions which John saw; that is, when the first seal was broken, so much of the book was unrolled as described the things which John saw at that time. But the sacred record has to do not so much with the description of the things seen, as with the things themselves. For I do not think that the horses and riders which John saw, were pictures or engravings on the roll, but objects of vision which he saw far down on the plains of earth.

When the Lamb had opened the first seal, one of the four beasts cried as with a voice of thunder, "come"; for all the best critics have rejected the last two words of this verse as having no place in the text. The living creature did not address himself to John, who was standing at his very side, for he spake in a voice of thunder. He addressed himself to the white horse and its rider, and called on them to come forth in the presence of the apostle and the heavenly congregation. Let it be remembered, not only under this seal, but also under the three seals which follow, that the language of the living one is not, "come and see"; but simply, "come," and that this word is addressed, not to John, but to the symbolical personages who appear in vision. We are not left at a loss to know which of the living creatures was the first speaker. It was the first of the living ones, who was like a lion, for we are told under the following seals, that each one of them spake in his order. It is worthy of remark and remembrance that, throughout the whole of the Apocalypse, when any of the living creatures is represented as speaking, his words have special reference to the earth, and to the affairs transpiring on the earth; and that when any of the elders is represented as speaking, his words have reference to heaven and to things transpiring in heaven. And this is fitting, for the four living ones are representatives of the church on earth, and the four and twenty elders are representatives of the church in heaven.

No sooner had the first beast cried with a loud voice, than John saw "a white horse," not on the plain of heaven where the heavenly congregation was gathered, but on the plains of earth. On this horse there sat a rider; and though his appearance is not particularly described, we must believe, from the words which follow, that he was a majestic and kingly conqueror. In his hand he carried a bow. A crown was given to him, not a crown of gold, but a garland of laurel, for this is plainly the meaning of the original; and a laurel crown is always an emblem of victory. This crowned rider upon the white horse went forth conquering and to conquer. A series of continual victories attended him, so that all his enemies were subdued.

This was what John saw when the first seal was broken. And the things which he saw were symbols, whose meaning is universally recognized. The horse is a symbol of power; white is a symbol of prosperity; a bow is a symbol of war, and the crown is a symbol of victory. Whatever theory of interpretation we may adopt, the meaning of these symbols is fixed.

II. Before entering upon a full explanation of THE MEANING of the horse and its rider, let me mention a few things which we must take for granted. In the first place, we must take it for granted that these symbols have some meaning. They are not such pictures as a man might see in the visions of the night, pictures grotesque and imaginary, which have no foundation save in imperfect health or an unquiet brain. They were inspired by the Spirit of the living God; and if they were inspired by the Spirit, they must have been intended to teach the apostle, and all the rest of the members of the church, some important lessons. Whether we will be able to discover these lessons and understand the meaning of the symbols, is another question. But the moment we grant that this book is inspired, that moment we must grant that it has a meaning in all its parts and in all its emblems.

In the second place, we must take it for granted that these symbols bear some resemblance to the things which they shadow forth. Unless they have such a resemblance, they cannot be symbols. And as they are symbols used by the Holy Ghost, they must be far more perfect than the symbols used by fallible men. The resemblance of the inspired symbols is founded sometimes on an outward likeness; for example, the brazen serpent which was lifted up on a pole in the wilderness was a symbol of Christ who was lifted up on his cross. Sometimes it is founded on a universal custom; the lamb is a symbol of Christ, because the lamb was continually offered as a sacrifice, and Christ is the great sacrifice. Every inspired symbol must have some resemblance to the thing symbolized. Therefore, whatever the symbols we are to consider may mean, we must expect to find a resemblance between them and the events which they shadow forth.

In the third place, we must take it for granted that these symbols point to future events. Again and again was John told that he was to see things which were to be thereafter. These future events would begin to take place immediately after the time when John saw his vision, for in the opening words of this book it is described as a revelation of "things which must shortly come to pass"; that is, the events predicted made a long series; and though this series was to stretch to the end of the present dispensation, yet it was to begin "shortly" after the time when the apostle saw the things which are here described. This is an important thought. It is the key note of the explanations which are to follow. Let it be firmly fixed in memory. To help in this, let us refer again to chapter I: 19, which lays down the plan of the entire book. "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." The first and second of these commands, the apostle has already obeyed, and now he is obeying the third. Whatever, then, the symbols under the first seal may mean, they must refer to events not long subsequent to the time of John.

Bearing these three things in mind, viz., that these symbols must have a meaning, that they must have some resemblance to the events shadowed forth, and that the events shadowed forth must begin to take place soon after the vision was seen, we are prepared to enter upon the explanation of the white horse and its rider. These symbols must describe something belonging to the earth. On this point there can be no doubt. As they describe things belonging to the earth, they must describe either the church or the nations of the world, for in these two organizations all men are included. Do the horse and its rider refer to the church of Christ on the earth? This question must be answered in the negative. The church, especially the church of that age, is not properly represented by a war-horse and a victorious king. The weapons of its warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. It does not go forth with armies and munitions of war. It has its conquests, but they are the conquests of peace. It may therefore be represented by a sower going forth to sow his seed, or by sheep feeding in green pastures and resting beside quiet waters. In the time of John, and during the century which followed, it might be represented by a captive in bondage to the civil government. But the church could not be appropriately represented by a horse and rider going forth conquering and to conquer, for then there would be no resemblance between the symbol and the thing symbolized.

And if the horse and its rider are not symbols of the church, they must be symbols of some of the nations of the earth. What nation could they symbolize? This is a question which even those who have but a slight acquaintance with history can answer. It can be said that at that time there was but one nation. The Roman empire had extended its boundaries over all the known world. There were a few barbarian tribes that as yet paid no tribute to Rome, but their freedom was the result of their weakness, and not of their strength. They had not been conquered, because they were so poor and insignificant that Rome did not think it worth while to conquer them. There were some kingdoms in Africa and Asia which had not acknowledged the supremacy of Rome, but they were so far distant that they were almost unknown in the capital of the world. Besides this, the Roman empire was, with a few trifling exceptions, the only one with which the church was brought into contact. We are therefore brought to the conclusion that the white horse which John saw must be a symbol of the Roman empire.

But does this symbol appropriately shadow forth the Roman government? The horse is a universally recognized symbol of power, and it was a favorite emblem of the Romans. It was stamped on their coins; it was graven on their monuments; it was painted in their pictures. In our days the thistle is the emblem of Scotland, the lily of France, and the eagle of our own republic. So in ancient days the horse was recognized as the emblem of

Rome, though perhaps not to the same extent as those symbols are recognized to which I have just referred. The white color of the horse, which is in striking contrast with the color of the horses which appear under the three following seals, is a symbol of prosperity; the bow which the rider carried, is a symbol of war; the crown which was given him, is a symbol of victory. And he went forth conquering and to conquer. Are these things appropriate symbols of the condition of the Roman empire? We know that the empire was sometimes prosperous, and sometimes it was humbled; sometimes it extended its boundaries further and still further from the centre of its influence, and sometimes, through civil strife and the struggles of ambitious men for power, it seemed as if it was about to be broken into fragments. What was the condition of the Roman empire immediately after John's vision in Patmos? Was it a time of prosperity and victory? If it was, then the emblems we are considering are appropriate symbols of the empire. If it was not a time of prosperity and victory, then these emblems are not appropriate. And when did John see his vision in Patmos? In my introductory lecture I endeavored, by a variety of arguments, to fix the time of the vision, and these arguments led us to the conclusion that John was in Patmos about the years 95 or 96. Now, what was the condition of the Roman empire at this time and from this time onward? To answer this question we must turn to the pages of secular history. Many writers have described the Roman empire at this time. Which one will we select to answer our question? Will we select one who was a zealous Christian, and whose professed object was to show the fulfillment of prophecy in the history of nations? The judgment of such a one might be biased; his testimony might have to be received with caution. Let us rather take the testimony of one who was an enemy to Christianity, and who embraced every opportunity to scoff at our holy religion and its founder. I refer to the historian Gibbon, and no one can accuse him of partiality toward the Bible or Christianity. What does this historian say of the condition of the Roman empire at the close of the first century? Before quoting the language of the historian, let me recall to mind the names of the emperors who swayed the Roman scepter at the time of which I speak. The reign of Trajan extended from the year 96 to the year 117. He was succeeded by Hadrian, who reigned from 117 to 138. He was succeeded by the two Antonines, who reigned from 138 to 180, and were succeeded by the bloody and infamous Commodus. This is the period, viz., from the beginning of the reign of Trajan, in the year 96, to the close of the reign of the Antonines, in the year 180, which is supposed to be included under the first seal.

And now let us hear what the infidel historian has to say concerning this portion of Roman history. With regard to its general characteristics, he says: "In the second century of the Christian era, the empire of Rome

comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valor. The gentle but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence; the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than fourscore years the public administration was conducted by the virtues and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 1. With regard to the first of the emperors mentioned by Gibbon, nothing need be said, for he died very soon after John had seen his vision. With regard to Trajan, the historian says: "Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. \* \* \* He descended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian gulf. He enjoyed the honor of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravaged the coasts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching towards the confines of India. Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations that acknowledged his sway." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 7. With regard to Hadrian, the historian says: "His life was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duties. Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot and bare-headed, over the snows of Caledonia and the sultry plains of the upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire which, in the course of his reign, was not honored with the presence of the monarch." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 9. Concerning the Antonines, the same historian says: "The two Antonines governed the Roman world forty-two years with the same invariable spirit of wisdom and virtue. \* \* \* Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 93. And Gibbon sums up this portion of history in these remarkable words: "If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power,

under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honor of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 95.

If Gibbon had intended to prepare a commentary on the symbols which were seen when the first seal was broken, could he have more skillfully shaped the facts in his history? Could John have chosen a more expressive emblem of this period of history than the horseman who went forth on a white horse, with a bow in his hand and a crown on his head, conquering and to conquer?

I have dwelt upon this seal at considerable length, for it was necessary to establish some general principles and to fix clearly the point at which this history of the future begins. These principles having now been established, and this point having now been fixed, we may make more rapid progress in explaining the verses that follow.

But before we turn away finally from the first seal, let us fix in our minds the truth which the Holy Spirit intended to convey to John by this vision. He showed the apostle that first among "the things which were to be thereafter," the Roman empire, with which the church was so intimately associated, was to enjoy a season of prosperity, of conquest and of victory, a season which is beautifully symbolized by the white horse and its rider. From profane history we learn that the Roman empire did enjoy such a season of prosperity during the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian and the two Antonines. We therefore conclude that the first seal has reference to that portion of history which is included between the years 96 and 180, and that the events described under the second seal will begin at the latter date and stretch down through the succeeding years.

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## LECTURE XVII.

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### THE SECOND AND THIRD SEALS.

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had

opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.—REV. 6: 3-6.

THE first seal had been opened; a portion of the book had been unrolled; the first living creature had cried with a loud voice; and John had seen the first horse and its rider go forth over the plains of earth, conquering and to conquer. When these things were done, everything in the heavenly council remained as it was before. But this was only the first scene in the panorama of the future. Another immediately follows. The Lamb breaks the second seal; another portion of the book is unrolled; the second living creature cries with a loud voice; and John sees another horse going out over the plains of earth.

Let us attend to the opening of THE SECOND SEAL.

I. According to the plan already laid down, we will in the first place describe THE SYMBOLS. What did John see when the second seal was broken? When this seal was broken, the second of the living ones, who has already been described as resembling a young ox, cried "come"; for it must be remembered that the words "and see" have been rejected by Biblical critics as having no place in the text. This word of the living one was addressed, not to John, who was watching with all his powers the unfolding of the heavenly vision, but to the unknown personage, who was to come forth out of the mysterious regions of the future. As if in obedience to this cry of the living one, another horse appeared upon the plains of earth, from which the white horse of the first seal had just disappeared. This horse differed in color from the horse which had preceded it, and from those which were to follow; it was red, and this color is the almost universally recognized symbol of wrath, and war, and carnage. That there may not be a doubt as to the meaning of this symbol, a few words of description are added. The rider on this horse had great power given to him, but it was not power to give joy and prosperity, but to take them away; it was not power to bless men with peace, but to remove peace from the earth; it was not power to make men love one another and to dwell together in the harmony which should mark brethren of a common family, but to make them kill one another. The rider upon this horse had also given unto him "a great sword." A sword is the symbol of war, or rather of the destruction of war; and a great sword would be a symbol of wars in which there would be an unusual destruction of human life.

This was the vision which came forth at the call of the second living one. A red horse appeared on the earth, and on him there sat one who had the appearance of a mighty military commander, to whom were given a great sword and power to banish peace from the homes of earth, to array men and nations in deadly hostility, and to fill the world with blood.

II. Having fixed the symbols of the second seal in our minds, we are ready to attempt **THEIR EXPLANATION**. As already explained, the horse is a symbol of strength ; the color of this horse is the symbol of carnage ; the great sword is the symbol of wars of unusual fierceness and destruction. This explanation of these symbols is greatly strengthened by the fact that the rider on this horse had power to banish peace and excite bloodshed.

If these symbols are to be applied to men and nations on the earth, what state of things would they describe ? Manifestly they would describe a period when war was the rule and peace the exception ; when war was attended with great destruction of life ; and when civil strife, the worst kind of war, led neighbors to kill each other with the sword. If such a state of things cannot be found on the earth, we will be baffled in our explanations, for the symbols must bear some resemblance to the things symbolized. Is such a period of war and carnage to be found ? To answer this question, we must turn to the pages of history. But to what part of history shall we look ? If we made no mistake in explaining the symbols of the first seal, this question is easily answered. Let me refer for a moment to that explanation. The white horse and his rider described that period of prosperity and conquest which the Roman empire enjoyed for about ninety years after the time of John's exile in Patmos, that is, from the year 96 to the year 180. Historians tell us that this was a period of unparalleled prosperity. Their words glow with enthusiasm as they describe the virtues of the emperors, the greatness of their victories and the happiness of their subjects. The language of one which was quoted in my last lecture, is, "if a man was called upon to fix a period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus."

If the things which John saw in his sublime vision were intended to shadow forth a consecutive history of human affairs, we would expect to find the events symbolized under the second seal following immediately after those symbolized under the first seal ; in other words, we would expect to find the events symbolized under the second seal in that portion of history, which describes the Roman empire from the year 180 and onwards. For the fulfillment of these symbols must be found in Roman history. The first and the second seals are closely related ; their symbols belong to the same class. And if the white horse and its rider describe the Roman empire, as we showed in our last lecture, then the red horse and its rider must also describe the same empire, though in a different phase of its history.

What was the condition of the Roman empire during the period referred to ? that is, from the year 180 onwards ? Was it a period of prosperity and victory, like that which preceded the year 180 ? No ; it was a time



of war and bloodshed. From the year 180, for about 60 years, was a series of civil wars, which continued with scarcely an interval. This half century is described by one historian, Sismondi, as "the most calamitous period of Roman history. "During that time," he tells us, "thirty-two emperors and twenty-seven pretenders to the empire hurled each other from the throne by incessant warfare." A full history of this period is to be found on the pages of Gibbon, and he is certainly a competent witness, for he wrote with no intention of proving that the words of revelation had been fulfilled. I would like to quote largely from his history, but the limits allotted to this lecture will not permit. However, a few passages selected almost at random, will show the propriety of representing the Roman empire at that time by the symbol of a red horse, and of describing it as a period when peace would be driven from the earth and when men would kill one another with the sword. With regard to Commodus, the historian says, "Commodus had now attained the height of vice and infamy. \* \* \* His ferocious spirit was irritated by the consciousness of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the just apprehension of danger, and by the habit of slaughter, which he contracted in his daily amusements. History has preserved a long list of consular senators sacrificed to his wanton suspicion, which sought out, with peculiar anxiety, those unfortunate persons connected, however remotely, with the family of Antonines, without sparing even the ministers of his crimes or pleasures. His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with impunity the noblest blood of Rome; he perished as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 115. The successor of Commodus was murdered by his soldiers after having reigned eighty-six days. Julian, the next emperor, reigned sixty-six days, when he met with a violent death. Of his short reign, the historian says, "he had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world, he found himself without a friend and even without an adherent. \* \* \* The people, secure in their numbers and obscurity, gave a free vent to their passions. The streets and public places of Rome resounded with clamors and imprecations. The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 129. Under the next emperor there was revolt after revolt, and war after war. And as if the bloodshed in these wars was not sufficient, he treated with extreme cruelty those whom he had defeated. Thus on one occasion "he condemned forty-one senators, whose names history has recorded; their wives, children and clients attended them in death, and the noblest provincials in Spain and Gaul were involved in the same ruin. Such rigid justice—for so he termed it—was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of insuring peace to the people or stability to the prince; and he condescended slightly to lament that to be mild, it was necessary that he should first be cruel."

Gibbon's Rome, vol. 1, p. 144. The next emperor, Caracalla, who is called "the common enemy of mankind," excelled in cruelty. "It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death. \* \* \* When a senator was accused of being a secret enemy to the government, the emperor was satisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle, he frequently drew the most bloody inferences. \* \* \* In the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands at Alexandria, in Egypt, for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousands of citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers; since, as he coolly informed the senate, all the Alexandrians, those who had perished and those who had escaped, were alike guilty." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 1, pp. 158-160.

Let these examples suffice. I might go over the history of the whole period and select similar examples from almost every page. The throne of the Roman empire was often bathed in blood. Thousands upon thousands of Romans were killed in war, and in conspiracies, and to gratify the revenge of those who were in power. If this is a true picture of the Roman empire, could John have chosen a better symbol to describe it than that of the red horse? And could he have condensed the history of that period in fewer words than these, "power was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another"? As we read the words of the historian Gibbon, it would seem, if we did not know better, that he was endeavoring to show that the vision of the seer of Patmos had been literally fulfilled. We are therefore brought to the conclusion that the symbols of the second seal describe this bloody portion of Roman history, which begins with the reign of Commodus and continues for about sixty years, that is, from the year 180 to the year 240; and that the events described under the third seal begin at the latter date and stretch on through succeeding years.

Let us now attend to the opening of THE THIRD SEAL.

When the Lamb had opened the third seal, the third living creature, who was like a man, cried "Come"; and as if in obedience to his call, another horse and rider were seen going forth over the plains of earth.

I. We are to describe THE SYMBOLS which John saw when this seal was broken. As has already been said, he saw a third horse, but this horse differed in color from those that had preceded it. It was black; and black is the universally recognized symbol of distress. If the white horse indicated a time of prosperity, and the red horse a time of civil war and blood-

shed, the black horse must indicate a time of distress. The particular source from which this distress should arise, whether from pestilence, or famine, or war, or oppression, is not indicated by the symbol. This must be learned from other parts of the vision.

He that sat on this horse did not carry in his hand a bow or a sword, as did the riders of the horses already described; he carried "a pair of balances." A pair of balances is often a symbol of justice; and if it stood alone, we might conclude that it shadowed forth a time when even-handed justice was strictly administered. But the color of the horse, as well as the description which follows, forbids this conclusion. A pair of balances is sometimes the symbol of great scarcity, for then everything is weighed with the greatest exactness. This is the meaning of the symbol here, for John heard a voice from the midst of the throne, making proclamation, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Let us take up the several parts of this proclamation and see what they mean. The measure here referred to is about equivalent to an English quart, and it was the usual daily allowance for one man. The word translated "penny" is the name of a coin which was equivalent to fourteen cents of our money, and it was the usual price paid for a day's labor. Therefore, a man's labor could procure only enough wheat for himself alone, to say nothing of those who were dependent on him, or of other food, or clothing, or expenses. When a measure of wheat sold for a penny, it must have been a time of scarcity. If wheat was sold at the same rate now, viz., \$4.50 per bushel, there would be great distress, and yet money, measured by the price of labor, and this is the only true standard, is much cheaper now than it was then.

The next part of the proclamation conveys the same idea of scarcity, for barley is a cheaper grain than wheat. The average ratio of the price of the two kinds of grain is about one to three. The last part of the proclamation conveys the same idea. "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Olive oil and wine were among the necessities, and not among the luxuries of the ancients. In a time of scarcity and distress, great care would have to be taken of the olive tree and the vine, lest their production would be diminished.

II. Let us now explain THE MEANING OF THESE SYMBOLS in their application to the history of the Roman empire. As has been said, the black horse, the pair of balances, and the proclamation, all indicated a time of scarcity and distress. Let us then turn to the pages of Roman history and see whether there was such a time of scarcity and distress, following the civil wars which were described under the symbols of the second seal.

Here permit me to make an observation, which perhaps should have been

made before. It is impossible to fix to the very year the beginning and the end of the periods described under the several seals. One period runs into another. The period of prosperity described under the first seal did not at once change into the civil wars of the second seal; and the civil wars described under the second seal did not at once change into the distress of the third seal. Each period had its distinguishing color, but one color shaded off so gradually into the next, that it is no easy matter to say just where one ends and the next begins. Therefore, I said that the period of prosperity ended and the period of civil war began about the year 180, though the causes which led to civil war can easily be traced before that date, and though the empire enjoyed some prosperity after that date. And, therefore, I said that the period of civil war ended and the period of distress began about the year 240, though there was scarcity before and civil war after that date. Bearing these observations in mind, I would say that the period described under the third seal begins about the year 240, and extends onward for about a quarter of a century.

When we turn to the pages of history, we find a remarkable correspondence between the condition of the Roman empire at this time, and the symbols which John saw in his vision. It was a time of great distress. This distress arose not so much from war, or from pestilence, or from famine, as from excessive taxation. Early in the third century, about the year 210, while the rider on the red horse of the second seal was in the midst of his career, the emperors, in order to carry on the wars in which they were continually engaged, and to support the immense armies which they found necessary to maintain, began to increase largely the taxation of their subjects. For example, during the reign of Caracalla, one of the most cruel of the emperors of that bloody period described under the second seal, the inhabitants of all the provinces were made full Roman citizens, a privilege which meant simply the right to be taxed. Hitherto they had been required to pay taxes only for the support of their provincial government; now they had to be taxed for the support of the imperial government as well. Formerly this had been borne by the inhabitants of Italy alone. The manner in which these taxes were levied is thus described by the historian: "The lands were measured by surveyors, who were sent into the provinces; their nature, whether arable, or pasture, or vineyards, or woods, was distinctly reported; and an estimate was made of their common value from the average produce of five years. The numbers of slaves and of cattle constituted an essential part of the report; an oath was administered to the proprietors, which bound them to disclose the true state of their affairs; and their attempts to prevaricate or elude the intention of the legislator, were severely watched and punished as a capital crime, which included the double guilt of treason and sacrilege. A large portion of the tribute was paid in money; and of the current coin of the empire, gold alone could be legally accepted.

The remainder of the taxes, according to the proportions determined by the annual indication, was furnished in a manner still more direct, and still more oppressive. According to the different nature of lands, their real produce in the various articles of wine or oil, corn or barley, wood or iron, was transported by the labor, or at the expense of the provincials, to the imperial magazines, from whence they were occasionally distributed for the use of the court, of the army and of the two capitals." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 2, p. 143.

The distress caused by this system of excessive taxation may be imagined, but we are not left to imagination. It is described at length. I might read such a description from Gibbon's "*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*." This author sees one great cause of the decline and fall of that empire, and no one can doubt the correctness of his opinion, in the excessive taxation which has been referred to. But another historian gives a more graphic picture of the distress under the exactions of the emperors, and I prefer to read a portion of what he says on this point. "Swarms of exactors sent into the provinces and cities filled them with agitation and terror, as though a conquering enemy were leading them into captivity. The fields were separately measured, the trees and vines, the flocks and herds numbered, and an examination made of the men. In the cities, the cultivated and the rude were united as of the same rank. The streets were crowded with groups of families, and every one required to appear with his children and slaves. Tortures and lashes resounded on every side. Sons were gibbeted in the presence of their parents, and the most confidential servants harassed that they might make disclosures against their masters, and wives that they might testify unfavorably of their husbands. If there were a total destitution of property, they were still tortured to make acknowledgments against themselves, and when overcome by pain inscribed for what they did not possess. Neither age nor ill health was admitted as an excuse for not appearing. The sick and the weak were borne to the place of inscription, and reckoning made of the age of each, and years added to the young and deducted from the old, in order to subject them to a higher taxation than the law imposed. The whole scene was filled with wailing and sadness. In the meantime individuals died, and the herds and flocks diminished, yet tribute was none the less required to be paid for the dead, so that it was no longer allowed either to live or die without a tax. Mendicants alone escaped, where nothing could be wrenched, and whom misfortune and misery had made incapable of further oppression. These the impious wretch, affecting to pity, that they might not suffer want, ordered to be assembled, borne off in vessels and plunged into the sea." Lactantius, quoted by Barnes.

It should be said that some of the emperors attempted to reduce these great burdens, but they accomplished little. The burdens grew greater and greater. During the years described under the third seal, the people became discouraged. They felt that there was no use in cultivating the soil,

for all the fruits of their toil were swept away to support the legions of Rome, and to supply the luxuries of the emperors and their subordinates. Therefore, their fields went to waste, and their homes were filled with poverty and distress. If we get this picture firmly fixed in our minds, we will have no difficulty in seeing the appropriateness of the emblems which are here used. "I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny: and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Before we turn away from the third seal, let us see what progress we have made in tracing the history of "the things which were to be thereafter." The Spirit indicated to the apostle that immediately following the time of his vision there was to be a period of prosperity; that this was to be followed by a period of civil war, and that this was to be followed by a period of distress. We have learned from secular history that there were such periods. The first lasted for about ninety years, the second for about sixty, and the third for about twenty-five. We must be astonished at the resemblance between the events described and the symbols used by the Spirit to describe them. We can easily recognize the white horse of prosperity, the red horse of civil war, and the black horse of distress, as they go forth one after another over the Roman empire during the first 250 years of the Christian era.

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## LECTURE XVIII.

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### THE FOURTH AND FIFTH SEALS.

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.—REV. 6: 7-11.

WE come now to the opening of the fourth seal, which shadowed forth more fearful judgments than those which preceded it. In discussing this seal, we will follow the method which we have followed in previous lectures.

I. WHAT DID JOHN SEE when the fourth seal was broken? When the Lamb had broken this seal and another portion of the book had been unrolled, when the fourth of the living creatures whose countenance was like that of a flying eagle, had cried "Come," and when, in obedience to his cry, the fourth vision made its appearance, John saw another horse go forth over the plains of earth, over which he had seen passing in succession the white horse of prosperity, the red horse of civil war, and the black horse of distress. But this horse differed widely in its color, and in its rider, and in its surroundings from those which had preceded it. It was pale, or livid, or ghastly green, the color of the body on which death has set its seal, and in which corruption has begun its work. This color is the symbol of sickness, mortality and death.

That there may be no doubt as to the proper application of this symbol, we are told that the name of him who sat upon the pale horse was "Death." The king of terrors is therefore personified here. He is represented as a mighty warrior, riding forth conquering and to conquer, and making men bow in submission to his authority. His appearance is not described. Nothing is said of his countenance or of his armor. These things are left to the imagination, and thus the vision is made all the more sublime; for true sublimity will not admit of too minute description. It must always partake more or less of the mysterious and the unknown. This symbol of the fourth seal has taken strong hold upon the imagination of men. The pen of the poet and the brush of the painter have described it. It has become so familiar that little children, as well as gray haired men, speak of "Death upon the pale horse," without thinking that they are using a figure of speech.

This was the color of the fourth horse, and this was the name of its rider. Fearful as these symbols are, other particulars are to be added to the vision, which will make them ten-fold more fearful. Death and the pale horse were not alone. They were followed by "Hades." This is a word of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, and in our Bible it is translated "hell." I need hardly say to those who are familiar with the Scriptures that this is an unfortunate translation. Hades does not mean the place of endless punishment, and this is the present signification of the word "hell." It describes the place of the dead, considered as an abode where they all, good and evil, dwell together. It is therefore almost equivalent to the word "grave." This should be remembered, or there are many passages in the Bible whose meaning we will not be able to understand. It was not hell, in the modern signification of the term, but the grave, which followed the pale horse and its rider. You will at once perceive that the grave is here personified. It is described as a great monster going forth after death, and devouring with open jaws the victims whom death has slain. This is a horrible figure. No one can realize it without a shudder. Death goes

forth slaying his thousands, and the monster of the grave, with open mouth, follows at his heels. But this figure is not peculiar to the Apocalypse. Isaiah uses it, and his language is even more startling than that of the seer of Patmos: "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."

To death and the grave a commission was given to smite the inhabitants of the earth with the sword, that is, with war; and with hunger, that is, with famine, for famine generally attends the devastations of war; and with death, that is, with pestilence, for pestilence, especially in eastern lands, was generally associated with war and famine; and with beasts of the earth, that is, with wild beasts, for as the population would be diminished by war, and famine, and pestilence, wild beasts would increase in number and fierceness. These things the Lord, in the prophecy of Ezekiel, calls his four sore judgments: "I will send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence."

The destruction which was to be brought by death and the grave through these four instrumentalities would be frightful. Power was given unto them over "the fourth part of the earth." This language indicates great mortality. Great multitudes of men were to be swept away into the grave by war, famine, pestilence and wild beasts. It seems to indicate that one-fourth of the human race, or at least that part of it included in the Roman empire, would be involved in common destruction.

This is the vision which John saw when the fourth seal was opened and the fourth beast cried with a loud voice. The king of terrors appeared upon the plains of earth riding upon a pale horse, and followed by the monster of the grave, who was ready with open mouth to devour the slain. To them was given power over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with wild beasts.

II. Let us now see whether THESE SYMBOLS WERE FULFILLED in the history of the Roman empire; for if we have rightly explained the meaning of the symbols under the former seals, the fulfillment of the symbols of the fourth seal must, without question, be looked for in the Roman empire. But before we turn to the history, let us inquire what these symbols would lead us to expect. They lead us to expect a time when death would make unusual ravages in the homes of men. If the white horse and its rider indicate a period of prosperity, and the red horse and its rider a period of civil war, and the black horse and its rider a period of distress, then the pale horse and its rider must indicate a period of mortality. We would also expect that this unusual mortality could be traced to the intimately related causes of war, famine, pestilence and wild beasts.



If no such period of mortality can be found in history, we will be baffled in our explanations, and we will be forced to the conclusion that all our previous exposition has been an error, and that we have been looking for an explanation of the meaning of the seals in the wrong direction.

In what period of Roman history would we expect to find the events described by the symbols of the fourth seal? If we have located the other seals with any degree of accuracy, we would expect this to follow immediately after the period of distress described under the third seal. Here let me say again, what should be remembered. It is impossible to fix to the very year when one period ends and the next begins. These periods run into each other. The periods of prosperity and civil war overlap each other, but the dividing line between them is about the year 180; the periods of civil war and of the distress caused by excessive taxation overlap each other, but the dividing line between them is about the year 240. So we may expect the periods of distress and mortality to overlap each other. I have already fixed the period of the third seal as extending from about the year 240 to about the year 265; and I believe the period of the fourth seal extends from about the year 265 to about the year 300. On account of these periods overlapping each other, we may expect to find unusual mortality, caused by war, famine and pestilence, before the year 265; but we must expect to find that mortality greatly increased after that date, when the rider on the pale horse is in the midst of his career. Now let us turn to the pages of history, and see whether our expectations have any foundation.

As we turn to the history of that period, the first thing which claims our attention is, that this was a time when the barbarians invaded the Roman empire. Vast hordes of these barbarians, Goths, Allemanni and Franks came down into the populous and cultivated provinces of the empire, sometimes defeating the legions of Rome, and sometimes being defeated; but whether victorious or vanquished, thousands upon thousands were slain. In addition to the barbarian invasions, there were many revolts in various parts of the empire, which were quelled only by the shedding of blood. I select a few passages from Gibbon's history, which will give some idea of the destructiveness of the wars of that period. Thus during the first invasion of the Goths, which occurred a few years before the beginning of the period supposed to be described under the fourth seal, he tells us, "the camp of the Romans was surprised and pillaged, and for the first time their emperor fled in disorder before a troop of half armed barbarians. After a long resistance, Philippopolis, destitute of succor, was taken by storm. A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city. Many prisoners of consequence became a valuable accession to the spoil; and Priscus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, blushed not to assume the purple under the

protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 1, p. 291. Again: he says of the first ten years of this period, "but the whole period was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity. As the Roman empire was, at the same time, and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers, we shall consult order and perspicuity by pursuing, not so much the doubtful arrangement of dates, as the more natural distribution of subjects. The most dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were: 1, the Franks; 2, the Allemanni; 3, the Goths, and 4, the Persians. Under these general appellations, we may comprehend the adventures of less considerable tribes, whose obscure and uncouth names would only serve to oppress the memory and perplex the attention of the reader." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 1, p. 299. Again he says, speaking of the invasion of the Allemanni, about the year 270, "the Romans received so severe a blow, that, according to the expression of a writer extremely partial to Aurelian, the immediate dissolution of the empire was apprehended. The crafty barbarians, who had lined the woods, suddenly attacked the legions in the dusk of the evening, and, it is most probable, after the fatigue and disorder of a long march. The fury of their charge was irresistible; but at length, after a dreadful slaughter, the patient firmness of the emperor rallied his troops, and restored in some degree the honor of his arms." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 1, p. 345.

Another agent of destruction was famine. And there was such a famine during the period which is supposed to be described. Of this famine, Gibbon thus speaks: "our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated. But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 1, p. 328.

Another agent of destruction was pestilence. And there was such a pestilence, which is thus described by the same historian: "Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year 250 to the year 265, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family, of the Roman empire. During some time, five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns, that had escaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 1, p. 329.

Another agent of destruction was wild beasts. Of this agent Gibbon says nothing, but other historians are not silent. One who wrote about

the year 296 speaks of wild beasts in such a way as to show that they were a great calamity. We also know from history, that the destruction arising from wild beasts was so great, that it, with other evils, was regarded as a judgment of heaven upon the empire because Christians were not put to death. Surely, then, during this period, death had power to kill with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with wild beasts.

What does history say with regard to the extent of the destruction of human life during this period? Does it tell that one-fourth of the inhabitants of the Roman empire were destroyed? Listen to the testimony of Gibbon on this point: "We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use, perhaps, in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus. Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence and famine had consumed in a few years the moiety of the human species." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 1, p. 829. Therefore, according to Gibbon's statement, it is probable that one-half of the human race had, during the period described, perished by the various agents mentioned.

As we gather up in our minds the pictures of this sad period when the sword, famine and pestilence made such ravages, we must be astonished at the correspondence between the events of history and the symbols of John's vision. How can the last half of the third century be better described than in the words before us? "And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat upon him was death, and the grave followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

We come now to the opening of THE FIFTH SEAL. When the Lamb had broken this seal, another portion of the sealed book was unrolled; but now none of the living creatures cried with a loud voice, and neither horse nor horseman appeared in the vision. There is a marked change, not only in this regard, but also in the place where the vision was seen. The symbols which John had seen under the former seals had been upon the plains of earth, but now the scene is transferred from the plains of earth to the celestial plain, on which the throne of God was set; and other parts of the heavenly scenery to which our attention has not yet been called are now brought into view. There is a heavenly temple, with its

courts, and its altars, and its furniture, in the immediate neighborhood of the throne, and the living creatures, and the four and twenty elders. To this temple we will often be called in subsequent visions, but now we see it, or rather its altar, for the first time.

I. THE THINGS WHICH JOHN SAW claim our attention in the first place. These things may be arranged under four particulars: the persons he saw; their position; their prayer; and their comfort.

1. Those whom John saw are described as "*martyrs*"; that is, those who had been put to death as witnesses for the truth. It was not the bodies of these martyrs which John saw, for their bodies were resting in their graves; it was their "*souls*." This vision shows us that the souls of the saints do immediately, at their death, pass into the presence of God and enjoy his favor. The reason of their martyrdom is revealed. It was "for the word of God"; that is, on account of their faithful adherence to the Scriptures; and "for the testimony which they held"; that is, on account of the testimony which they bore in favor of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men. Therefore, these men were true martyrs, for it is not death, but the cause in which death is incurred, which makes a man a martyr.

2. *The position* of these martyred souls is described as "under the altar"; that is, the heavenly altar to which I have referred. Of course this does not mean that the altar was builded upon them, but that they were close to the altar. And as the altar in the earthly temple was the place at which God was worshiped, their position implies, that though they were in heaven they were still engaged in worship.

3. *Their worship*, at least a part of it, consisted in prayer. Their prayer was earnest, for "they cried with a loud voice." They prayed for a just punishment to fall upon those who had shed their blood, and who were the enemies of the cause of Christ on the earth. They appealed to the holiness of God and to his truth. As he was one who could not look upon sin, and in whose sight the persecution of his saints must be a grievous offence; as he was one who had pledged his faithful word that his church would not be destroyed; they appealed to him as "holy and true" to vindicate himself by judging with righteous judgment his and their enemies. Their prayer also implies that the persecution had continued long, and that it was yet raging on the earth. It also implies that they had a knowledge of what was going on in the world. They knew that their earthly brethren were being persecuted; and as God was just, they prayed him to manifest his justice and his holiness.

4. *Their prayer* was answered, not by giving them at once everything they asked for, but by filling their souls with comfort. "White robes were given unto every one of them," robes which were emblems of purity and innocence. In this way God expressed his approval of their lives, and gave

them a pledge of their future happiness. God also comforted them by revealing to them something of his future plans. "They should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Their brethren on the earth must suffer persecution for a time, till the glorious number of the martyrs was filled. Till the coming of that time, they must wait; and when it came, their prayer would be fully answered.

This was what John saw when the fifth seal was opened. He saw worshipers around the heavenly altar, and these worshipers were the souls of the martyred dead. He heard their earnest cry for just punishment to be visited upon the earthly persecutors of the bleeding church. He saw the comfort which they received, the white robes which were given to them, and the blessed assurance that after a little season the number of the martyrs would be filled, and the just punishment of heaven would be inflicted on their enemies.

II. We have now TO EXPLAIN THE SYMBOLS which John saw. Their meaning is so plain, that we can have but little difficulty. They must represent a period of persecution, when the enemies of the church exerted themselves for its destruction, when there was great suffering among the earthly saints, and when the souls of the martyred dead were continually going up to the heavenly altar, and crying for vengeance upon those who were bathing their hands in saintly blood. Was there such a time of cruelty and bloody persecution? Of course there had been many persecutions of the church. There were persecutions before John was exiled to Patmos. It was persecution which had imprisoned him on that lonely isle. There were persecutions during the years which are described under the first four seals. But these persecutions were local. If we have correctly fixed the time when the symbols of those four seals were fulfilled, we would expect the symbols of the fifth seal to be fulfilled about the end of the third century, or the beginning of the fourth. Was there such persecution at this time? Let us turn to history and see. Not long before the close of the period of mortality described by the pale horse of the fourth seal, the Roman empire began to recover something of its former strength. Diocletian ascended the throne in the year 285. Under his government the prosperity of Rome slowly increased. But about the year 292, he began a series of persecutions, which, however, did not break out with violence till the year 303. These persecutions continued during the rest of his reign, and during the reign of his successors till the year 311. This is the period which we believe to be shadowed forth under the fifth seal. So violent were the persecutions during this period that it is known in history as the "era of martyrs." For the particulars of this period, we must turn to the pages of Gibbon. And though this historian attempts to show that the number of martyrs has been

greatly exaggerated, yet his own account shows that the persecution was one of unusual severity, and that it was a determined effort on the part of the Roman government to blot out the Christian religion forever. "After the success of the Persian war had raised the hopes and the reputation of Galerius, he passed a winter with Diocletian in the palace of Nicomedia ; and the fate of Christianity became the object of their secret consultations. The experienced emperor was still inclined to pursue measures of lenity ; and though he readily consented to exclude the Christians from holding any employments in the household or the army, he urged in the strongest terms the danger, as well as the cruelty, of shedding the blood of those deluded fanatics. Galerius at length extorted from him the permission of summoning a council, composed of a few persons, the most distinguished in the civil and military departments of the state. The important question was agitated in their presence, and those ambitious courtiers easily discerned that it was incumbent on them to second, by their eloquence, the importunate violence of the Cæsar. It may be presumed that they insisted on every topic which might interest the pride, the piety or the fears of their sovereign in the destruction of Christianity." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 2, p. 61. "The next day the general edict of persecution was published ; and though Diocletian, still averse to the effusion of blood, had moderated the fury of Galerius, who proposed that every one refusing to offer sacrifice should immediately be burnt alive, the penalties inflicted on the obstinacy of the Christians might be deemed sufficiently rigorous and effectual. It was enacted that their churches, in all the provinces of the empire, should be demolished to their foundations ; and the punishment of death was denounced against all who should presume to hold any secret assemblies for the purpose of religious worship." Vol. 2, p. 63. "A great number of persons, distinguished either by the offices they had filled, or by the favor they had enjoyed, were thrown into prison. Every mode of torture was put in practice, and the court, as well as the city, was polluted with many bloody persecutions." Vol. 2, p. 66. "The resentment or the fear of Diocletian at length transported him beyond the bounds of moderation, which he had hitherto preserved, and he declared, in a series of cruel edicts, his intention of abolishing the Christian name. By the first of these edicts, the governors of the provinces were directed to apprehend all persons of the ecclesiastical order ; and the prisons, destined for the vilest criminals, were soon filled with a multitude of bishops, presbyters, deacons, readers and exorcists. By a second edict, the magistrates were commanded to employ every method of severity which might reclaim them from their odious superstition, and oblige them to return to the established worship of the gods. This rigorous order was extended, by a subsequent edict, to the whole body of Christians, who were exposed to a violent and general persecution. Instead of those salutary restraints which had required the direct

and solemn testimony of an accuser, it became the duty as well as the interest of the imperial officers to discover, to pursue, and to torment the most obnoxious among the faithful. Heavy penalties were denounced against all who should presume to save a proscribed sectary from the just indignation of the gods and of the emperors." Vol. 2, p. 69. "In this general view of the persecution which was first authorized by the edicts of Diocletian, I have purposely refrained from describing the particular sufferings and deaths of the Christian martyrs. It would have been an easy task, from the history of Eusebius, from the declamations of Lactantius, and from the most ancient acts, to collect a long series of horrid and disgusting pictures, and to fill many pages with racks and scourges, with iron hooks and red-hot beds, and with all the variety of tortures which fire and steel, savage beasts, and more savage executioners, could inflict on the human body." Vol. 2, p. 79.

But in the year 311 the emperor Galerius, who was then dying, and who seemed to be filled with remorse for the blood he had shed, published a decree in which he put an end to the persecutions, asked for the prayers of Christians, and gave peace to the church. The following is his decree: "Among the important cares which have occupied our mind for the utility and preservation of the empire, it was our intention to correct and re-establish all things according to the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans; we were particularly desirous of reclaiming into the way of reason and nature the deluded Christians who had renounced the religion and ceremonies instituted by their fathers; and presumptuously despising the practice of antiquity, had invented extravagant laws and opinions, according to the dictates of their fancy, and had collected a various society from the different provinces of our empire. The edicts which we have published to enforce the worship of the gods, having exposed many of the Christians to danger and distress, many having suffered death, and many more, who still persist in their impious folly, being left destitute of any public exercise of religion, we are disposed to extend to those unhappy men the effects of our wonted clemency. We permit them, therefore, freely to profess their private opinions, and to assemble in their conventicles without fear or molestation; provided, always, that they preserve a due respect to the established laws and government. By another rescript, we shall signify our intentions to the judges and magistrates; and we hope that our indulgence will engage the Christians to offer up their prayers to the Deity whom they adore, for our safety and prosperity, for their own, and for that of the republic." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 2, p. 75.

This I believe to be the period shadowed forth by the symbols of the fifth seal, a period which extended from about the year 292 to about the year 311, in which unnumbered thousands of martyred souls went up

through fire and blood to the heavenly altar, and cried for vengeance upon those who were straining every nerve to blot out the name of Christ from the earth.

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## LECTURE XIX.

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### THE SIXTH SEAL.

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal; and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us, from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?—REV. 6: 12-17.

WE have thus far been able to trace, not doubtfully, but with a considerable degree of confidence, the visions of the seer of Patmos, as they have been fulfilled in the history of the world. We have seen that there was a period of prosperity, shadowed forth by the white horse and its rider; a period of civil war, shadowed forth by the red horse and its rider; a period of distress, shadowed forth by the black horse and its rider; a period of mortality, shadowed forth by the pale horse and its rider; a period of martyrdom, shadowed forth by the souls of the martyrs, crying for vengeance beside the heavenly altar. We come now to the opening of the sixth seal, and if I mistake not we will find its symbols clearly fulfilled and its period plainly marked in the history of the Roman empire.

I. Let us notice, one by one, THE THINGS WHICH JOHN SAW when the sixth seal was opened. When the Lamb had opened this seal, another portion of the sealed book was unrolled and a new vision presents itself before the apostle. The scene of this vision was not on the celestial plain, as the scene of the previous vision had been. It was on the plains of earth, over which the horses of the first four seals had passed in succession. We must therefore expect that this seal has specially to do with earthly affairs.

1. The first thing, which John saw when the sixth seal was opened and he looked from his place beside the throne of God, was "*an earthquake.*" And it was not merely an earthquake, but a "*great earthquake.*" With the effects of such a convulsion of nature we are all familiar, not from our



observation, but from our reading. Many parts of our world have been visited by earthquakes, and as we have read of the consternation and the devastation which they wrought, we could but shudder. But these earthquakes were limited in their extent; the one which John saw was general, and the whole world, which in his vision was stretched out like a map before him, was shaken. Let us, in spirit, place ourselves at his side and try to see what he saw. The earth heaves and rolls like the billows of the sea; great chasms are opening on every side; plains are lifted up into mountains, and mountains sink beneath the waves; oceans sweep over inhabited lands; temples and palaces fall into shapeless ruins, and men and beasts are involved in the common destruction. That is what John saw, for he looked and "lo, there was a great earthquake."

2. But this was not all he saw. "*The sun became black as sackcloth of hair.*" Sackcloth was a coarse black cloth, commonly made of hair. It was used for the garments of mourners, and of it the black tents of the wandering tribes of the East were made. In the vision of the seer the sun withheld its light, and refused to fill the earth with brightness. It clothed itself in mourning garments, and became as black as the desert tents of the Bedouin. A deep darkness seemed to gather over the face of nature.

3. "*The moon became as blood.*" It no longer looked down upon the earth with its accustomed light; it seemed as if struggling with the smoke of a burning world, or as if washed in the blood of nations.

4. "*And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*" By a poetic figure the sky is here represented as a solid concave, in which the stars are set. But this great convulsion of nature had shaken them from their places, and they fell to the earth as blasted fruit falls from its tree when the tree is shaken by a violent wind.

5. "*The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.*" The sky is here represented as a parchment spread out; and it is represented as disappearing as quickly as an ancient book would disappear which was suddenly rolled together and hidden out of sight.

6. "*And every mountain and island were moved out of their places.*" It is to be noticed that this, and all the other particulars we have mentioned, would naturally attend an earthquake.

7. *All men*, of all classes, were seen hiding themselves in terror and crying for deliverance from approaching wrath. The consternation which prevailed was universal. Kings and all high officials in the state; those whose riches placed them above all ordinary calamities; great generals and those who had distinguished themselves by deeds of heroism; slaves and freemen, all hid themselves in caves and in the mountains, and cried to the rocks to cover them from the approaching judgment; for they thought, as many have always thought when some great and unusual convulsion of

nature has shaken the earth, that the day of judgment had come. They thought that the Lamb was about to take his seat upon the throne and judge the world; and they knew that they were not able to abide that day of wrath. Of course the day of judgment had not come, but they supposed it had; and their terror and their anxiety to escape were as great as they would have been if it had really been the last day of the world's history.

This was a part of what John saw when the sixth seal was opened. The description of the other parts of the vision which are recorded in chapter VII must be postponed till we have explained the symbols we have already described. But before we attempt an explanation, let us get a clear idea of that part of the vision to which our attention has already been directed. John saw a great convulsion of nature. The earth was shaken with a great earthquake, so that every mountain and every island of the sea were moved out of their places. The great luminaries were darkened; the stars fell from the sky; the heavens disappeared as an ancient book when it was rolled together; and all the inhabitants of the earth, filled with consternation, ran wildly here and there to find a place of refuge.

II. Having reached a clear conception of the symbols, let us, in the second place, explain THEIR MEANING. As all the things described under the former seals are symbolical, it would be absurd to suppose that the things described under this seal are not symbolical. If they are symbolical, what do they symbolize? In other words, what events are shadowed forth by the phenomena which John saw in vision? An earthquake is a symbol of great commotions and overturnings in the nations of the earth. The propriety of this symbol is universally recognized. In the word of God it is used again and again with this meaning. Thus it is said, in the book of Haggai, 2: 6, 7, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." Again, in Isaiah 24: 20, it is said, "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage." The darkened sun and moon are symbols of great calamity, but the particular form which the calamity would assume is not indicated by the symbol itself. Stars in Scripture language are symbols of princes and rulers; and therefore the falling of the stars from the sky would be a symbol that princes and rulers were cast down from their thrones. The heavens, rolled together as a scroll, would be a symbol that mighty changes were to occur in the high places of the earth, changes as great as if the visible sky was to be removed. The removal of the mountains and the islands would be a symbol of great changes, in which things long and apparently permanently established would be removed out of their places.

The universal consternation of the inhabitants of the earth would indicate that the effect of these great changes would be to fill the hearts of all with terror.

If we have interpreted these symbols rightly, we would expect to find in Roman history a period of great changes. We would expect to find the empire convulsed by these changes from centre to circumference; the rulers who had long borne the scepter hurled from their thrones, and other rulers of an entirely different character taking their places; and that the change in the government would be as great as the change in the natural world would be if the old heavens were rolled up and laid away, and a new heavens were spread out in their place. We would expect to find these changes accompanied with war, bloodshed and calamity, for the sun was dressed in mourning, and the moon was bathed in blood. We would expect to find a period of general uneasiness and terror.

Was there such a period as this? Before we can answer this question, there is another which demands our attention; at what time would we expect this period to occur? If the seals shadow forth a consecutive history, we would expect to find the fulfillment of the sixth seal immediately after the era of the martyrs, which was described under the fifth seal. In our last lecture, we fixed this era as extending from about the middle of the reign of Diocletian to the year 311, when Galerius published his decree of toleration, which gave peace to the church. We would expect to find that this period of change and commotion in the world, which is shadowed forth by the great earthquake, would follow soon after the year 311. With these expectations in our mind, let us turn to the pages of history and see whether our expectations have any foundation.

Up to this time the emperors had been pagans. They had been worshippers of the gods of Rome. They had tried to destroy the Christian religion. Thousands upon thousands of Christians had been slain. For a man to avow himself to be a Christian was to cut himself off from all hope of political distinction and to open the door for a speedy death. But just at this period, an unexpected and marvelous change occurs. A Christian ascends the throne; Christianity becomes the popular and established religion of the empire; Christians are lifted to place and power; pagans who had long held the reins of government are superseded, and the temples of Roman mythology are destroyed or changed into temples for the worship of Christ.

In the year 306, a young man, Constantine by name, whose mother is said by tradition to have been the daughter of a British king, succeeded his father in Britain as Cæsar of the western province of the Roman empire. From the very beginning, he was kind to the Christians, and the persecutions of the era of the martyrs were less severe in his province than they were elsewhere in the empire. We cannot follow step by step the won-

derful career of this man, who occupies such a large place in both ecclesiastical and secular history, and who was for the scattered and struggling Christian church what David was for the scattered tribes of Israel, though he had neither the piety nor the ability of the son of Jesse. It will be sufficient to say, that he slowly advanced toward the East. Battle after battle was fought, army after army was defeated, rival after rival was conquered, until at last, in the year 324, his last rival was slain, and the empire was consolidated with Constantine as its sole emperor.

Of his conversion to Christianity, but little is known with certainty. History and tradition have become so interwoven, that it is hard to separate the true from the imaginary. We know that for some years he manifested no religious principles of any kind; but about the year 313 he embraced Christianity, in consequence, it is said, of a vision which he saw. The story of his vision has been told again and again in history and in song. As he was marching towards Rome, he saw a brilliant cross in the sky, on which was inscribed the words, "by this, conquer." This amazing object astonished the whole army as well as the emperor himself, who was as yet undetermined in the choice of a religion, but his astonishment was converted into faith by the vision of the following night. Christ appeared to him, and displaying the same sign of the cross, commanded him to make a similar standard, and assured him that fighting under this standard he would gain the victory over all his enemies. Into the discussion concerning the truth of this story, I do not propose to enter. It was told by the emperor himself, when on his death-bed, to Eusebius, who baptized him, and it is preserved in some writings of Eusebius which are yet extant. But this is the sole authority on which it rests. Therefore we may say, with the judicious Mosheim, who expresses the commonly received opinion, "this vision has never yet been placed in such a light as to dispel all doubts and difficulties."

However, the manner of his conversion is a matter of little importance. A far more important question is, was his conversion real? It must be confessed that his life and actions were not such as the Christian religion demands from those who profess to believe its sublime doctrines. It is also certain that from the time of his conversion till near the end of his life, he continued in the state of a catechumen, or, as we would say, a probationer, and was not received by baptism into the church till a few days before his death, when that sacred rite was administered to him by the bishop of Nicomedia. But these things are not sufficient to prove that his conversion to Christianity was not sincere. It was customary with many in those days to delay baptism to the very last; and his life will compare favorably with that of many Christians in more recent centuries, whose imperfect enlightenment has led them to deeds of cruelty and superstition, but whose piety is unquestioned.

But in the explanation of the sixth seal, we do not have to do so much with the conversion of Constantine, as with the effect of his conversion on the Roman empire. This effect is described at large in the history of those times. I select, as in my former lectures, a few passages from Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," passages which will give some idea of the unparalleled change in converting pagan Rome to Christian Rome, a change which was wrought in less than fifteen years; for in the year 310 Christians were everywhere persecuted, and the souls of the martyrs, gathered around the heavenly altar, cried for vengeance, while in the year 325 Christianity was the established religion of the empire. "The public establishment of Christianity may be considered as one of those important and domestic revolutions which excite the most lively curiosity, and afford the most valuable instruction. The victories and the civil policy of Constantine no longer influence the state of Europe; but a considerable portion of the globe still retains the impression which it received from the conversion of that monarch; and the ecclesiastical institutions of his reign are still connected by an indissoluble chain with the opinions, the passions and the interest of the present generation." Vol. 2, p. 248.

Again: the historian says, when narrating the fact that the cross, which had been an object of horror, was suddenly made the standard of the empire, and when describing the terror which this standard wrought in the minds of men; "An instrument of the tortures which were inflicted only on slaves and strangers, became an object of horror in the eyes of a Roman citizen; and the ideas of guilt, of pain and of ignominy, were closely united with the idea of the cross. The piety, rather than the humanity of Constantine, soon abolished in his dominions the punishment which the Saviour of mankind had condescended to suffer; but the emperor had already learned to despise the prejudices of his education, and of his people, before he could erect in the midst of Rome his own statue, bearing a cross in its right hand, with an inscription which referred to the victory of its arms, and the deliverance of Rome, to the virtue of that salutary sign, the true symbol of force and courage. The same symbol sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine; the cross glittered on their helmet, was engraved on their shields, was interwoven into their banners; and the consecrated emblems which adorned the person of the emperor himself, were distinguished only by richer materials and more exquisite workmanship. But the principal standard which displayed the triumph of the cross was styled the *labarum*, an obscure, though celebrated name, which has been vainly derived from almost all the languages of the world. It is described as a long pike intersected by a transversal beam. The silken veil which hung down from the beam, was curiously inwrought with the images of the reigning monarch and his children. The summit of the pike supported a

crown of gold which enclosed the mysterious monogram, at once expressive of the figure of the cross, and the initial letters of the name of Christ. The safety of the labarum was intrusted to fifty guards, of approved valor and fidelity; their station was marked by honors and emoluments; and some fortunate accidents soon introduced an opinion, that as long as the guards of the labarum were engaged in the execution of their office, they were secure and invulnerable amidst the darts of the enemy. In the second civil war, Licinius felt and dreaded the power of this consecrated banner, the sight of which, in the distress of battle, animated the soldiers of Constantine with an invincible enthusiasm, and scattered dismay through the ranks of the adverse legions." Vol. 2, p. 260.

In the following language, the same historian describes the wonderful progress of Christianity: "If the parallel be confined to the extent and number of their evangelic victories, the success of Constantine might perhaps equal that of the apostles themselves. By the edicts of toleration, he removed the temporal disadvantages which had hitherto retarded the progress of Christianity; and its active and numerous ministers received a free permission, a liberal encouragement, to recommend the salutary truths of revelation by every argument which could affect the reason or piety of mankind. The exact balance of the two religions continued but a moment; and the piercing eye of ambition and avarice soon discovered that the profession of Christianity might contribute to the interests of the present, as well as of a future life. The hopes of wealth and honors, the example of an emperor, his exhortations, his irresistible smiles, diffused conviction among the venal and obsequious crowds which usually fill the apartments of a palace. The cities which signalized a forward zeal by the voluntary destruction of their temples were distinguished by municipal privileges, and rewarded with popular donatives; and the new capital of the East gloried in the singular advantage that Constantinople was never profaned by the worship of idols. As the lower ranks of society are governed by imitation, the conversion of those who possessed any eminence of birth, of power, or of riches, was soon followed by dependent multitudes. The salvation of the common people was purchased at an easy rate, if it be true that, in one year, twelve thousand men were baptized at Rome, beside a proportionable number of women and children, and that a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the emperor to every convert." Vol. 2, p. 273.

And this marked change in the religion of the state was not accomplished without disaster and bloodshed. Again and again did the believers in Roman mythology make a stand against the armies of the Christian emperor, but again and again they were defeated. One heathen governor after another was hurled from his throne, and his place given to a Christian. What a remarkable correspondence there is between this political

and religious revolution, and the symbols which are employed to describe it! It was a moral earthquake. Old and established customs and orders were shaken from their foundations. Pagan rulers fell from their place in the political sky, as untimely fruit falls from a shaken tree. Wars and bloodshed prevailed, until the sun and moon, in sympathy, covered their faces from the sight. The worshipers of Jupiter, and the whole retinue of heathen gods, were in consternation. One edict after another went forth against them. They sought refuge in the deserts and the mountains. They thought the end of all things was at hand, and they cried for deliverance from the approaching doom.

If any one is inclined to think that the symbols, which were seen at the opening of the sixth seal, are too sublime to shadow forth the period which has been described, let him remember the greatness of the change which was wrought, a change without a parallel in history; and let him remember the effects which were wrought by that change, effects which have not yet ceased to operate in Christendom, and which will not cease to operate till the end shall come. Even we, in this remote period of time, and in this distant corner of the earth, have reason to rejoice that Constantine was raised to the throne, and that the cross of Christ became the recognized standard of the empire. Remembering all this, we will see that the apostle's vision beautifully prefigures the period which has been described, which began about the year 312, and which continued during the reign of Constantine and of his successors; "I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, a great earthquake," and the appearance of the heavens and the earth was changed, and there was universal consternation in the hearts and homes of men.

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## LECTURE XX.

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### GOD'S SEALED ONES.

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtholim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses

were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.—REV. 7: 1-8.

WHEN the sixth seal was opened, the first thing which John saw was a great earthquake. In our last lecture, we showed that this earthquake shadowed forth the great commotions which attended and followed the change from pagan Rome to Christian Rome. Up until the accession of Constantine, the Roman emperors had been worshipers of heathen gods, they had persecuted the followers of Jesus, and they had tried to blot out the Christian religion from the earth. But with his accession there was a marvelous change. Constantine himself embraced Christianity, pagan rulers were hurled from their places in the political sky, old and established orders and customs were removed, heathen temples were destroyed or changed into temples for the worship of Christ, and Christianity became the established and popular religion of the empire. All this is beautifully symbolized by the quaking earth, the falling stars, the removing of the mountains and the islands, the universal consternation, and the changed appearance of the landscape in the apostle's vision. But this was not all John saw when the sixth seal was opened. Two other visions, the vision of God's sealed ones, and the vision of the palm-bearing multitude, intervene before the breaking of the seventh seal. To the first of these visions, your attention is invited in the present discourse.

I. We must DESCRIBE THIS VISION, as it actually presented itself before the seer of Patmos. The time when this vision appeared is clearly indicated. It was "after these things"; that is, after the earthquake and its attending circumstances, which are described in the concluding verses of the previous chapter. The scene of this vision was on the plain of earth, which had just been shaken by the great convulsion of nature. We are therefore to suppose that after the earthquake had passed, the earthly landscape, which was spread out far beneath the apostle's feet, resumed its former appearance, in readiness for the vision, on whose description we are about to enter.

The first thing which John saw in his present vision, was "four angels, standing on the four corners of the earth." Let me remind you of the position of the apostle. He had passed through the open door of heaven and was standing on the celestial plain beside the throne of God. Far below, he saw the earth, over which all the visions he had seen, save one, had passed. The earth which he saw was, according to the received opinion of the times, a vast plain, having four corners, these corners being towards the four points of the compass. At each of these corners, a mighty angel stood, but not in idleness. They were actively engaged in restraining the



winds, that they "should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." The winds blow in every direction, but it is convenient to speak of them as coming from the four points of the compass. Therefore, "the four winds of the earth" would include every wind that blows. These winds seem to be represented as destroying monsters, eager to go forth and work ruin on the earth. But the mighty angels held them in check, and would not suffer them to injure anything on the sea or the dry land. We are, therefore, to picture to ourselves the landscape which John saw in his vision, and which had recently been shaken by the great earthquake, as reposing in deepest calm. Though devastating tempests were ready to burst upon it, they were held back by supernatural power. The sea was unruffled; the land was visited by no destructive hurricane; the leaves upon the trees were unstirred; or if they were stirred at all, it was with the gentlest breeze; for the angels would not suffer the struggling winds to inflict injury upon the earth or its inhabitants. But this was only the beginning of this sublime vision. The seer saw another angel "ascending from the east." Why this angel is represented as coming from the east, we do not know, unless it is because the east is the place where the sun rises and the morning star appears. The east may, therefore, by a poetical figure, be regarded as the source of blessings, especially of spiritual blessings, which come to scatter the darkness of nature's night.

This angel carried in his hand "the seal of the living God"; that is, the seal which God had appointed, and which God had commissioned him to use. Of the form of this seal, nothing is said; but as it was customary for the kings of the east to have their own names engraved on their seals, it is most natural to suppose, that on the seal which the angel carried was the name of God. The design of this seal is clearly brought out in the following verses. It was to be used for setting a mark on certain men, that they might be distinguished from all others, and recognized as the servants of God. This seal-bearing angel cried to his four brethren, who were holding back the tempests which were threatening the earth, and said, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Here we have the reasons why the winds were to be restrained. It was that the servants of God might be sealed. We have the duration of the restraint. It was till the sealing of the servants of God was completed. We have the persons to be sealed. They were the servants of God. We have the place in which they were to be sealed. It was on their foreheads. We have the person by whom the sealing was to be accomplished. It was the angel, though the use of the plural "we" seems to indicate that he would not do it alone; but no intimation is made as to whether he was to have the assistance of men or of angels. We are to understand from the words of the seal-bearing angel, that he was to go forth and set a mark upon some of the inhabitants of the earth, by which they were to be recognized as the servants of God.

This angel fulfilled his mission. He sealed all those who were truly God's servants. John did not see this done, or at least he does not say that he saw it done, but after it was accomplished, he heard the announcement made that the number of the sealed was "one hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." Let it be remembered that, according to Scripture language, Israel is the name of the church of God. Examples of this are so common in the Bible, and of so frequent use in the present day, that men employ the phrase, "the Israel of God," to describe the church, without thinking that they are employing a figure of speech. It appears, from the announcement which John heard, that all the members of the church were not to be sealed. Only one hundred and forty-four thousand of them were honored with this honor. This was a comparatively small proportion. The children of Israel, during the reigns of David and Solomon, numbered six or seven millions; and though they were widely scattered at the beginning of the Christian era, there is no reason to believe that their number was lessened. The one hundred and forty-four thousand, therefore, indicates that only a small proportion were sealed. But the sealed ones were chosen from all the tribes, twelve thousand being chosen from each tribe. The catalogue of the tribes, which is contained in verses 5-8, is in several particulars a peculiar one. In the first place, Levi is reckoned among the tribes. This is not usually the case. As Levi received no territorial inheritance in Canaan, and as the Levites were scattered through the whole land, they are not generally counted to make up the number of the twelve tribes. But as Levi was the priestly tribe, and as it may be regarded as the symbol of the gospel ministry, the fact that only twelve thousand were sealed out of this tribe may indicate that the church, at the period referred to, was so corrupt that no more true servants of God were found among the ministers than among any other class of professing Christians. In the second place, the tribe of Ephraim is here called the tribe of Joseph. But this is not surprising. Though Ephraim was the younger of the sons of Joseph, yet he received special blessings, and his tribe was far more numerous than that of Manasseh. Therefore it is not strange that his tribe should be regarded as the representative of the house of his father, and that it should be called by Joseph's name. In the third place, and this is the strangest peculiarity of the catalogue, the tribe of Dan is omitted. No satisfactory reason for this omission has been assigned. We know that in other catalogues the names of some of the tribes are omitted. For example, in the blessing which Moses pronounced upon the tribes, the name of Simeon is omitted. In the genealogy of the tribes, the names of both Zebulon and Dan are omitted. For these omissions no good reason has been assigned. The omission of the name of Dan in the present instance may be owing, as some have supposed, to the fact that this tribe early fell into idolatry, and was notorious for its idol

worship through the whole of its history. So great was its sin, that it hardly deserved a place in the visible church of God. The omission of this tribe may indicate that at the period shadowed forth by this vision, a portion of the Christian church would be so corrupt that in it none of the sealed servants of God would be found.

This was the vision which John saw. The symbols are so plainly described that there can be no difference of opinion concerning them, though there is a great difference of opinion with regard to the events which they symbolize. Devastating tempests were ready to burst upon the earth, but they were held back by the angels of God, until another divine agent could go forth through the church on the earth and draw a line of separation between true Christians and false, between the true servants of God and those who were his servants only by profession. Upon the former some mark was set by which they could be distinguished from all others. These sealed ones were few in number when compared with the entire church, for there were but one hundred and forty-four thousand out of all the millions of Israel. They were found, not in one particular locality or section of the church; they were chosen out of all the tribes. These things John saw and heard as he looked down upon the plains of earth: He saw the four angels holding back the struggling winds; he saw another angel going forth with the seal of God to seal the servants of God; and he heard the number of the sealed, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

II. We are now ready to enter upon the consideration of **THE FULFILLMENT OF THESE SYMBOLS**. Let it be borne in mind that these things are symbols. Many expositors strangely regard a part of this vision as literal. They think that the tribes here referred to are the literal tribes of ancient Israel, and that at the time which is here prefigured God would choose out of Israel a definite number to be his servants. But how can this be? Long before John was in Patmos the ten tribes had been scattered through the world; and if the tribes themselves had not been lost, all distinction between them had been blotted out. Besides this, a part of the vision is without question symbolical; and if a part of the vision is symbolical, it is natural to suppose that it is all symbolical. We are brought to the same conclusion, if we compare this vision with the former ones. If they are symbols, it is reasonable to conclude that this is a symbol. Then let it be remembered that the things described in this vision are symbols. They were not literal winds, or literal angels, or literal tribes of Israel, or a literal seal, which passed before the eyes of the apostle.

If these things are symbols, what do they symbolize? The winds are the recognized symbols of war and its attending desolations. Again and again is this symbol used in the Old Testament, and its meaning cannot be questioned. Thus Daniel in his vision saw the four winds striving upon

the great sea. Thus God says: "Upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of the heaven, and will scatter them." Again he says: "I will raise up against Babylon the destroying wind." And the angels holding back the winds is a symbol that God would, through his appointed agents, restrain for a time the threatening calamities. Israel, as I have said, is a symbol of the Christian church. The sealing of a portion of Israel is a symbol that God would take out of the visible church some to be his peculiar servants, and that he would distinguish them by some conspicuous sign, which would be a badge of safety. That this is the meaning of the sealing is evident from the parallel passage, Ezekiel 9: 1-6. The number of the sealed, viz., one hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of Israel, is a symbol that only a few, comparatively speaking, of the members of the church during the period described, would be worthy to be called the servants of God.

Let it also be remembered that if our theory of interpretation is correct, the fulfillment of these symbols will follow soon after the events symbolized by the great earthquake of the previous vision. In our last lecture it was shown that that earthquake shadowed forth the marvelous confusion by which pagan Rome was changed into Christian Rome at the time of Constantine's accession to the throne. And if the visions of John were designed to reveal a consecutive history, we must expect to find the events symbolized by the restraining of the threatened tempests and the sealing of God's servants soon after Constantine became sole ruler of Rome, and Christianity became the established religion of the empire. Are there any important events in this period of history which bear a resemblance to the symbols employed in the vision, and which have been described?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us inquire, without being influenced by any preconceived theory of interpretation, what the symbols of this vision would lead us to expect. We would expect to find some great calamity threatening the stability and the very existence of the Roman empire. We would expect to find this threatened calamity strangely and mysteriously delayed for a time. We would expect to find the Christian church including great multitudes within its pale. We would expect to find that only a small number out of this great multitude were sincere Christians and the true servants of God. We would expect to find that these true servants of God were in some way, perhaps by the doctrines which they held or by the life which they led, distinguished from all other men. We would expect to find this mark as conspicuous as if they had been sealed in their foreheads. We would expect to find these true servants of God in all parts of the church, for they were chosen from all the tribes of Israel. We would expect the sealed ones to include all the true servants of God, for twelve is one of the numbers of perfection, and the sealed ones were twelve times twelve thousand.

worship through the whole of its history. So great was its sin, that it hardly deserved a place in the visible church of God. The omission of this tribe may indicate that at the period shadowed forth by this vision, a portion of the Christian church would be so corrupt that in it none of the sealed servants of God would be found.

This was the vision which John saw. The symbols are so plainly described that there can be no difference of opinion concerning them, though there is a great difference of opinion with regard to the events which they symbolize. Devastating tempests were ready to burst upon the earth, but they were held back by the angels of God, until another divine agent could go forth through the church on the earth and draw a line of separation between true Christians and false, between the true servants of God and those who were his servants only by profession. Upon the former some mark was set by which they could be distinguished from all others. These sealed ones were few in number when compared with the entire church, for there were but one hundred and forty-four thousand out of all the millions of Israel. They were found, not in one particular locality or section of the church; they were chosen out of all the tribes. These things John saw and heard as he looked down upon the plains of earth: He saw the four angels holding back the struggling winds; he saw another angel going forth with the seal of God to seal the servants of God; and he heard the number of the sealed, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

II. We are now ready to enter upon the consideration of **THE FULFILLMENT OF THESE SYMBOLS**. Let it be borne in mind that these things are symbols. Many expositors strangely regard a part of this vision as literal. They think that the tribes here referred to are the literal tribes of ancient Israel, and that at the time which is here prefigured God would choose out of Israel a definite number to be his servants. But how can this be? Long before John was in Patmos the ten tribes had been scattered through the world; and if the tribes themselves had not been lost, all distinction between them had been blotted out. Besides this, a part of the vision is without question symbolical; and if a part of the vision is symbolical, it is natural to suppose that it is all symbolical. We are brought to the same conclusion, if we compare this vision with the former ones. If they are symbols, it is reasonable to conclude that this is a symbol. Then let it be remembered that the things described in this vision are symbols. They were not literal winds, or literal angels, or literal tribes of Israel, or a literal seal, which passed before the eyes of the apostle.

If these things are symbols, what do they symbolize? The winds are the recognized symbols of war and its attending desolations. Again and again is this symbol used in the Old Testament, and its meaning cannot be questioned. Thus Daniel in his vision saw the four winds striving upon

the great sea. Thus God says: "Upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of the heaven, and will scatter them." Again he says: "I will raise up against Babylon the destroying wind." And the angels holding back the winds is a symbol that God would, through his appointed agents, restrain for a time the threatening calamities. Israel, as I have said, is a symbol of the Christian church. The sealing of a portion of Israel is a symbol that God would take out of the visible church some to be his peculiar servants, and that he would distinguish them by some conspicuous sign, which would be a badge of safety. That this is the meaning of the sealing is evident from the parallel passage, Ezekiel 9: 1-6. The number of the sealed, viz., one hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of Israel, is a symbol that only a few, comparatively speaking, of the members of the church during the period described, would be worthy to be called the servants of God.

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Now let us turn to the pages of history and see whether these expectations are realized. Was there any calamity which threatened the Roman empire at this time? Every one acquainted with Roman history must be ready to answer this question in the affirmative. The hordes of Goths, and Vandals, and Huns, and other barbarians, were gathering upon the frontiers of the empire and threatening its destruction. Again and again they filled the whole kingdom with terror; again and again they made partial inroads into the provinces, but still they were strangely restrained. They did not successfully invade any considerable extent of territory until about the year 395. Then victory began to crown their arms. Province after province fell. Rome itself was three times besieged, until at last, in the year 410, it was taken and pillaged. The ravages of these barbarians are supposed to be described in Revelation VIII, when the trumpet angels begin to sound. But from the beginning of the reign of Constantine they were strangely restrained, as if the angels of God were holding them back. The empire was generally at peace. This period is described by Gibbon in the following language; and if we did not know better, we would think that he was writing an explanation of the symbols of the first part of this vision—that he was telling us what was the meaning of the profound calm while the four angels were holding the tempests: “The impartial historian, who acknowledges the justice of their complaints, will observe some favorable circumstances which tended to alleviate the misery of their condition. The threatening tempest of barbarians, which so soon subverted the foundations of Roman greatness, was still repelled or suspended on the frontiers. The arts of luxury and literature were cultivated, and the elegant pleasures of society were enjoyed by the inhabitants of a considerable portion of the globe. The forms, the pomp and the expense of the civil administration contributed to restrain the irregular license of the soldiers; and although the laws were violated by power or perverted by subtlety, the sage principles of the Roman jurisprudence preserved a sense of order and equity, unknown to the despotic governments of the East. The rights of mankind might derive some protection from religion and philosophy; and the name of freedom, which could no longer alarm, might sometimes admonish the successors of Augustus that they did not reign over a nation of slaves or barbarians.” Gibbon’s *Rome*, vol. 2, p. 151.

But why was it that, in the language of Gibbon, “the threatened tempest of barbarians, which so soon subverted the foundations of Roman greatness, was still repelled or suspended on the frontiers”? It was that God might set a mark upon his true servants to distinguish them from mere nominal members of the church. What, then, was the condition of the church at this time? We know enough of human nature to believe that when Christianity became popular, multitudes would embrace it from unworthy motives. That this was the case, we learn from Gibbon; “The

hopes of wealth and honors, the example of an emperor, his exhortations, his irrepressible smiles, diffused conviction among the venal and obsequious crowds which usually fill the apartments of a palace. The cities which signalized a forward zeal by the voluntary destruction of their temples, were distinguished by municipal privileges, and rewarded with popular donatives; and the new capital of the East gloried in the singular advantage that Constantinople was never profaned by the worship of idols. As the lower ranks of society are governed by imitation, the conversion of those who possessed any eminence of birth, of power, or of riches, was soon followed by dependent multitudes. The salvation of the common people was purchased at an easy rate, if it be true that, in one year, twelve thousand men were baptized at Rome, besides a proportionable number of women and children, and that a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the emperor to every convert." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 2, p. 274.

While the Christian church was persecuted, it remained comparatively pure; but it could not withstand the smiles of prosperity. Though its members largely increased, its purity diminished. It became very corrupt, as we would expect, if we have not been indifferent readers of ecclesiastical history. In fact, Christianity, both in its outward form and in its inward life, was little better than paganism. Listen to some extracts from Mosheim's *Church History*, which will give a correct idea of the corruption of the church during this period. "An enormous train of different superstitions were gradually substituted for true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution proceeded from a variety of causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites, and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity, which the generality of mankind have towards a gaudy and ostentatious religion, all contributed to establish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of Christianity. Accordingly frequent pilgrimages were undertaken to Palestine and to the tombs of the martyrs, as if there alone the sacred principles of virtue and the certain hope of salvation were to be acquired. The reins being once let loose to superstition, which knows no bounds, absurd notions and idle ceremonies multiplied almost every day. Quantities of earth and dust brought from Palestine, and other places remarkable for their supposed sanctity, were handed about as the most powerful remedies against the violence of wicked spirits, and were sold and bought everywhere at enormous prices. The public processions and supplications by which the pagans endeavored to appease their gods, were now adopted into Christian worship, and celebrated in many places with great pomp and magnificence. The virtues which had formerly been ascribed to the heathen temples, to their lustrations, to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches, to water consecra-



ted by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the same privileges that the former enjoyed under the darkness of paganism were conferred upon the latter under the light of the gospel, or rather, under that cloud of superstition which was obscuring its glory. It is true, that as yet, images were not very common; nor were there any statues at all. But it is, at the same time, as undoubtedly certain as it is extravagant and monstrous, that the worship of the martyrs was modeled by degrees, according to the religious services that were paid to the gods before the coming of Christ." Mosheim's Church History, vol. 1, p. 111.

"While the Roman emperors were studious to promote the honor of Christianity by the auspicious protection they afforded to the church, and to advance its interests by their most zealous efforts, the inconsiderate and ill directed piety of the bishops cast a cloud over the beauty and simplicity of the gospel, by the prodigious number of rites and ceremonies which they had invented to embellish it. And here we may apply that well known saying of Augustine, that 'the yoke under which the Jews formerly groaned was more tolerable than that imposed upon many Christians in his time.' The rites and institutions, by which the Greeks, Romans and other nations had formerly testified their religious veneration for fictitious deities, were now adopted, with some slight alterations, by Christian bishops, and employed in the service of the true God. \* \* \* These fervent heralds of the gospel, whose zeal outran their candor and integrity, imagined that the nations would receive Christianity with more facility, when they saw the rites and ceremonies to which they were accustomed, adopted in the church, and the same worship paid to Christ and his martyrs, which they had formerly offered to their idol deities. Hence it happened that, in these times, the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little, in its external appearance, from that of the Christians. They had both a most pompous and splendid ritual. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, croziers, processions, lustrations, images, gold and silver vases, and many such circumstances of pageantry, were equally to be seen in the heathen temples and in the Christian churches." Mosheim's Church History, vol. 1, p. 119.

But though the church of this period was so corrupt, God did not leave himself without witnesses. He raised up distinguished men who taught the true doctrines of grace. Some of these men are yet celebrated for their evangelical teaching. Let me mention the names of a few, as they are recorded in the history of the church: "Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, is celebrated on account of his learned and pious labors, and particularly famous for his warm and vigorous opposition to the Arians. Basil, surnamed the great, bishop of Cæsarea, in point of genius, controversial skill, and a rich and flowing eloquence, was surpassed by very few in this century. \* \* \* John, surnamed Chrysostom, on account of

his extraordinary eloquence, a man of noble genius, governed successively the churches of Antioch and Constantinople, and left several monuments of his profound and extensive erudition. \* \* \* Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa have obtained a very honorable place among the theological and polemic writers of this century, and not without foundation, as their works sufficiently testify. \* \* \* Jerome, a monk of Palestine, rendered by his learned and zealous labors such eminent services to the Christian cause, as will hand down his name with honor to the latest posterity. \* \* \* The fame of Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in Africa, filled the whole Christian world; and not without reason, as a variety of great and shining qualities were united in the character of that illustrious man. A sublime genius, an uninterrupted and zealous pursuit of truth, an indefatigable application, an invincible patience, a sincere piety, and a subtle and lively wit, conspired to establish his fame upon the most lasting foundations." Mosheim's Church History, vol. 1, pp. 109, 110.

The influence of these teachers is easily traced in history. They instilled their doctrines into the minds of their disciples, until their disciples were easily distinguished, not only by their more scriptural belief, but also by their more holy life, from the great mass of professing Christians by whom they were surrounded. These men went through the church, and by their instructions drew a line between the true and the false, so that there was a church within the church, an Israel chosen out of Israel. Their work is beautifully described by the symbol of the vision, for they set a seal upon the foreheads of the servants of God, so that by life and doctrine the servants of God could be distinguished from mere nominal Christians. But the number of true Christians was small when compared with the number of professors. It was indeed as if the number of the sealed was but one hundred and forty-four thousand out of all the millions of the tribes of Israel.

These I believe to be the things shadowed forth by the symbols of this vision, viz., the barbarian tempest restrained on the frontier of the empire; the general corruption of the church, and the separation of God's few and faithful servants from the many unfaithful ones by the instruction of his ministers, whom he raised up for this very purpose; things which are distinctly seen in the history of the Roman empire and church from the days of Constantine to about the year 395, when, at the sounding of the trumpets of the seventh seal, the barbarian tempest was let loose, and terrible woes filled the earth with misery.

A practical thought presents itself here. The process of sealing the servants of God is yet in progress. God still draws a line of distinction between his people and other men, and he distinguishes the former by setting his seal upon them. Thus it is said, "God has sealed us and given

us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Are you sealed by this seal, which is the Holy Ghost?

## LECTURE XXI.

### THE PALM-BEARING MULTITUDE.

After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—REV. 7: 9-17.

THERE are three distinct visions under the sixth seal. The first is the vision of the great earthquake, which has been explained as shadowing forth the moral and political convulsions which attended the accession of Constantine to the throne, and the recognition of Christianity as the established religion of the empire. The second is the vision of God's sealed ones, which has been explained as shadowing forth the general corruption of the church during the fourth century, and the gathering out of it a few faithful ones to be the true servants of God. The third is the vision of the palm-bearing multitude, upon whose consideration we now enter. Every one must see at a glance that the vision is a peculiar one, differing in many respects from those which have preceded it. If we can get a clear idea of the impressions which were produced upon the apostle's mind by the visions which he had already seen and by those he was yet to see, we will probably discover the key which will unlock the meaning of the vision of the palm-bearing multitude.

The visions which John had seen were generally of the most discouraging kind. There was to be a period of civil war; then a period of black distress; then a period of great mortality; then a period of persecution, during which multitudes of martyred souls would gather around the

heavenly altar ; then, after a time of triumph, there was to be a period of unfaithfulness, when only a few out of the thousands of professing Christians would be worthy of the name of the servants of the living God. All this must have had a depressing influence upon the mind of the apostle. This depressing influence would be increased by the visions he was yet to see. When the trumpet angels began to sound, woe after woe would be let loose upon the world. After seeing all these things, the apostle might think that the Christian church was a failure. He might think that the troubles through which it had to pass were so great that only a few would be brought home to glory through its instrumentality. It was therefore necessary to comfort the apostle, in view of what he had already seen, and to strengthen him for the still more gloomy visions which were yet to be revealed. How could this comfort and strength be best imparted ? By permitting him to have glimpses of the final glory of the church ; to see that the great tribulations of time were the necessary preparation for heaven, and to witness the great gathering of the redeemed and their infinite and eternal blessedness in heaven. Therefore, in this comforting vision of the palm-bearing multitude, he is carried beyond the years of time and beyond the day of judgment, and he is enabled to see the number and the happiness of the glorified ones, when our God has brought them all to their heavenly home and filled their hearts with the unutterable joy of perfect redemption.

Then let it be remembered that this vision of the palm-bearing multitude does not shadow forth the events of earthly history. We are not to look for its fulfillment in the annals of nations. It points to a time when earthly history shall be ended. This is indicated by the scene of the vision. It is not on the plains of earth—it is on the celestial plain, where the throne of God was set, over which the arching rainbow was stretched, and around which the four beasts and the four and twenty elders were gathered. It is still further indicated by the sublime description, a description too sublime for present fulfillment. The number of the saved is too great, and their happiness too perfect for any period in the history of the earthly church. Let it then be remembered that this vision has reference to heaven ; not to heaven as it now exists, but to heaven as it shall exist when all the redeemed shall be gathered home ; that heaven to which the eyes of the dwellers in this vale of tears so often turn for comfort. Bearing this in mind, read with wonder and awe the description of the vision which was vouchsafed to the seer of Patmos, and which he was moved to record for strengthening the faith of believers to the end of the world. In this description, there are three points which are prominently brought out, and to which I invite your attention, viz : 1. The redeemed multitude. 2. The rejoicing angels. 3. The blessedness of heaven.

I. We have a description of **THE REDEEMED MULTITUDE**. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

1. *The number* of the redeemed whom John saw, gathering about the throne of God on that celestial plain which was like a crystal sea, clear as glass, is not given. They were a multitude—a great multitude—a great multitude which no man could number. This fact in itself shows that the present vision points to the glorious eternity of the future. In any past age the number of the redeemed on the earth has been comparatively small. Many have been called, but few have been chosen. Even in the days of Constantine, when the whole world was nominally Christian, there were only one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones. Even in our own days, when the banner of the cross has been lifted in every nation, and when professing Christians are in number like the sand upon the sea shore, true believers in Christ are not too many for the human mind to number. But when all the saints, from all the ages and from all the lands, shall be brought home to glory, who can count them? Abel, first among the saved, will be there. Patriarchs, and prophets, and priests, will stand at his side. Apostles and teachers, Jews and Gentiles, Barbarians and Scythians, bond and free, will help to swell the throng. Who can tell the number? Who can count the multitude? In spite of all the persecutions which have smitten the church; in spite of all the trials through which it has passed; in spite of the uncounted host which have followed the lead of Satan down to the regions of endless death; when God shall gather his many saints about his throne at last, they will be a great multitude which no man can number.

2. This great multitude of the redeemed *was chosen* "out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Some were taken from all classes of men, whether divided by the governments under which they lived, or by the ancestry from which they descended, or by the communities in which they were gathered, or by the languages which they spoke. The gospel of the Son of God is not for one nation alone. All nations, "from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand," are invited to participate in its salvation, and this invitation will be accepted by those who will be saved. The final gathering will be composed of a more mixed multitude than that which listened to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Lands of which the apostles never heard will be represented. Redeemed from China's teeming cities will be there; redeemed from the banks of the sacred Ganges will stand beside the holier river of the water of life; redeemed from beneath the shadow of Egypt's pyramids will wonder at the eternal buildings

of the golden city ; redeemed from the mountains of Switzerland will shout for joy on Mount Zion ; redeemed from the forests of our own wild West will stand beneath the shadow of the tree of life ; redeemed from every nation will join in that heavenly worship, and, forgetting the dialects of earth, will speak only the language of heaven. The great multitude will be "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."

3. We have *the position* of this multitude of the redeemed. They are described as standing "before the throne and before the Lamb." While they were here on the earth, they were in one sense far from God. They saw through a glass darkly. Though they longed for intimate communion, they were held back by the infirmities of the flesh. But when the day of the heavenly glory shall come, they will stand before the throne and in the presence of the Lamb with nothing to interrupt their worship or to mar the sweetness of their intercourse.

4. We have *their attire*. They were clothed "in white robes," and carried "palms in their hands." The white robes were symbols of purity ; the palm branches were symbols of victory. It should be remarked that the language used to describe this vision reminds us in several places of the feast of the tabernacles. This was the most joyous gathering required by the ceremonial law. It was celebrated when the crops of the summer had been harvested and when the labor of the year was ended. The people assembled at Jerusalem, and with mingled joy and worship kept their harvest home. So that gathering which John saw in heaven is the great harvest home after the fullness of the world has been reaped. The work of the saints will all be done ; their battles will all be fought ; their enemies will all be overcome ; they will put on their white robes ; they will lift up their emblems of victory, and, while not forgetting the work they have done or the struggles through which they have passed, they will enter into the full enjoyment of God "in the rest that remaineth."

5. We have *the song* of the redeemed. "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." I need hardly say that they do not express a desire that God should be saved. Such a thought would be absurd and blasphemous. In their song, they ascribe their own salvation, and all that is included in it, to God alone. Salvation will be the great theme of praise in the upper sanctuary. All other sources of thanksgiving will be forgotten. If it is ever our privilege to reach the city of the crystal sea, it will be to us a never ending wonder that during our earthly pilgrimage, we thought so little of the everlasting salvation.

Let it be noted that the redeemed in heaven ascribe the glory of their salvation equally to the Father and the Son. They do not exalt him that sitteth upon the throne before the Lamb. Certainly, then, the Saviour must be more than a man, more than an angel ; for those who have reached the full enlightenment of heaven would not give equal worship to the

Creator and a creature. In heaven all doubts as to the deity of the Lamb will be forgotten, and the glory of salvation will be alike ascribed to the Lamb and to him that sitteth upon the throne.

Such are the redeemed in heaven. In number, they are innumerable; in origin, they are chosen out of all nations; in position, they are near the throne; in attire, they wear the emblems of purity and the badges of victory; and in worship, they ascribe all glory to the eternal Sire and his eternal Son.

II. The second thing in this vision which claims our attention is THE REJOICING ANGELS. "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

1. Note *the position* of the angels. They were "round about the throne," but they did not occupy the nearest place. The innumerable multitude of the redeemed, the four living ones, and the four and twenty elders were immediately before the throne; but this great congregation was fringed by an outer circle of angel worshipers. Here is one of the wonders of redemption. The angels, who never transgressed a single commandment of their God, worship at the greatest distance from the central throne, while the saints, redeemed from the earth, who were once polluted and rebellious, occupy the place of honor at the very side of God. Why is this? Why are the redeemed honored before the unfallen? We can answer only this: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

2. Note *the posture* of the angels. They "fell before the throne on their faces," in token of deepest adoration, while the redeemed stood. In answer to the question, why is this? we can only say as before, "even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

3. Note *the song* of the angels. It begins and ends with "amen," a word which expresses the heartiest assent to the truth uttered. They ascribe blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might to God. There is no need of explaining these words, for their meaning is obvious. The general idea is that all praise is due to God; every excellent attribute of character is found in him, and every blessing comes from him. It is, however, to be observed that they do not speak of salvation, for the very obvious reason that this is a blessing which they never have enjoyed. Whatever other favors they have had from God, they have not known how sweet a thing it is to be pardoned.

We need not be surprised at the joy of the angels, for they are intensely interested in the success of the plan of salvation, though they have no personal interest in it. We are told that even now, while this plan is

being wrought out on the earth, there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over every sinner that repenteth. And if they joy over the repentance of every sinner, how much greater will be their joy, when at last all of God's saved ones will be brought safely to their heavenly home? We may, therefore, expect that the sweet notes of the unfallen angels will always have a place in the unending anthems of eternal praise.

III. The third thing in this vision which claims our attention is THE BLESSEDNESS OF HEAVEN. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The poet Burns said he could never read these verses without tears; and our hearts must be callous if we can listen to them unmoved.

1. *Who are they who are to enjoy this blessedness?* This is an important question; and to it our attention, as well as the attention of the apostle, is especially called. One of the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the glorified church, came to him and asked him who the members of this white robed multitude were, and whence they came. John modestly asserted his ignorance and expressed his belief that his questioner was in possession of the knowledge. And he was not mistaken. The elder knew who they were and whence they came. They were those who had come up out of great tribulation. This points to their earthly origin, and to the trials which formed a necessary part of their sanctification. It also points to the fact that their sanctification was complete and that their trials were ended. The world, and its sorrows and its sufferings, had been left behind.

But this is not sufficient to describe this white robed multitude. Though trial is the road through which they entered glory, trial is not peculiar to them. Tribulation, of one kind or another, is the common heritage of man. Unbelievers, as well as believers, have their sorrows and their tears. Therefore, the elder tells the apostle that the worshipers whom he saw were those who had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"; and by this they are distinguished from all others who have lived and died on the earth. There seems to be some incongruity in saying they had made their robes white by washing them in blood. But let it be re-



membered that there is a reference to the Mosaic ritual, according to which the tabernacle and its furniture were made ceremonially clean by sprinkling them with blood. And the robes of the heavenly congregation were made clean, not by the tribulation through which they had passed, but by the sprinkling of the blood of the great sacrifice. It was not their sorrows and sufferings and tears which had made them holy, but the blood of the Lamb which had been shed. Surely, if this was the case, Jesus was put to death, not as a martyr or as an example, but as a vicarious sacrifice.

Here, then, we have clearly described those who shall enjoy the blessedness of heaven. They are those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and brought up out of great tribulation. No others have any right to look forward to this blessedness in hopes of enjoying it. Are we thus redeemed—thus washed in the blood of Christ? If so, we may know that our place among the white robed multitude is sure. If we are not thus redeemed and washed in the blood of Christ, we have no present foundation on which to build the hope of immortality. If we die without redemption and washing, our voices will never join in the praises of the blessed.

2. The elder not only tells us who are to enjoy the blessedness of heaven; he also tells us, in few and graphic words, *in what that blessedness consists*. This blessedness, whatever it is, depends on their washing in the blood of Christ, and not on the great tribulations through which they had passed. This is evident from the word "therefore," which binds the blessedness of heaven to the atonement of Christ in a bond which can never be broken. "They have washed their robes, *therefore* are they before the throne of God." The blessedness of the saints consists partly in their nearness to God. They are "before the throne." In one sense they are near to him in the present life. His presence goes with them wherever they go, and abides with them wherever they abide. But this nearness is not worthy to be compared with the nearness of the hereafter, for then, without a shadow or a cloud to intervene, they stand before the throne forever.

Their blessedness consists also in uninterrupted and unwearying worship. They "serve him day and night in his temple." Heaven is not a place of idleness. There God is to be served as well as here. Here our service is suspended by the return of night; but there no night ever calls the worshiper to repose, or wraps him in forgetfulness. Here our service is suspended by weariness, for our weak humanity must have its hours of rest; but the worshipers in the heavenly temple will know no fatigue. Their praise will ever continue without pause and without end.

Their blessedness also consists in intimate communion with God. "He shall dwell among them." As the tabernacle ever stood in the midst of the tribes of Israel, so God's dwelling place will ever stand in the midst of redeemed Israel. He will be forever their nearest neighbor.

Their blessedness will also consist in entire freedom from all such calamities as they experienced on the earth. They will never know the pangs of hunger; their tongues will never be parched by thirst; they will never be smitten by burning heat or scorching sun; they will eat of the heavenly food; they will drink of the water of life; they will find shelter beneath the shadow of the Almighty. Such a description of heaven would appeal powerfully to the dwellers in those sultry lands in which the Christian religion was cradled. They knew, better than we can know, what is meant by famine, and thirst, and burning heat. Therefore the prophet Isaiah describes heaven in the very language which John was moved to employ: "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them." And the reason for their entire freedom from all such calamities as they knew on earth is because the Lamb shall be their shepherd.

In this, another part of their blessedness consists: The Lamb shall feed them, and guard them, and watch over them, and lead them to the ever-flowing fountains, where every want will be supplied and every desire gratified.

Their blessedness also consists partly in this, that God will "wipe away all tears from their eyes." This world of ours is a vale of tears, and men go weeping through it from the cradle to the grave. Who has not wept at the death of friends? At his own losses and disappointments? At the treatment he has received from others? At the sins he has committed, and at the faults of others? If our spiritual hearing was only sharpened, we could hear the patter of tears falling unceasingly from the eyes of our fellow pilgrims, as the rain sometimes patters against the windows. What a world ours would be, if in the future not a tear would be shed, and no head would be bowed in grief! And this will be in heaven. Not another hope will be disappointed. Not another sin will be committed. Not another friend will toss in dreadful agony upon a bed of sickness. Not another grave will be opened. God will wipe away all tears from all eyes. What blessed words are these! Let us bind them to our aching hearts; words which Isaiah first uttered, and which John was moved to record a second time—words which contain one of the sweetest as well as one of the briefest descriptions of our heavenly home: "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes."

What an effect this vision must have had on John! How it must have strengthened him for the sights he was yet to see! It should have a similar effect on us, inspiring us to faithfulness in all the duties of our pilgrimage. Just here this one question presents itself for an answer: Are we among the persons who shall enjoy the blessedness of heaven?—among those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb?

## LECTURE XXII.

## THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE FIRST TRUMPET.

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.—REV. 8: 1-7.

It may be well to review the progress we have already made in our exposition. John had been carried in vision to the celestial plain and placed before the throne of God. He saw the representatives of the church, the holy angels, the multitude of the redeemed, the heavenly temple and its furniture, and the New Jerusalem and its jeweled walls. The earth, which was the scene of the battles and triumphs of the church militant, was spread out like a map far beneath his feet. The book, sealed with seven seals, was placed in the hands of "the Lamb of God," and as he broke these seals, one after another, successive symbols appeared, which shadowed forth to the apostle things which were to be thereafter. When the first seal was broken, there appeared a white horse with its rider, shadowing forth a period of great prosperity in the Roman empire, a period which began about the time of the apostle's vision, and continued for nearly a century. When the second seal was broken, there appeared a red horse with its rider, shadowing forth a period of civil war and bloodshed. When the third seal was opened, there appeared a black horse with its rider, shadowing forth a period of famine. When the fourth seal was opened, there appeared a pale horse with its rider, shadowing forth a period of great mortality. When the fifth seal was opened, there appeared martyred souls under the heavenly altar, shadowing forth that period of persecution through which the church passed about the beginning of the fourth century. When the sixth seal was opened, there appeared marvelous changes in the earthly landscape, shadowing forth the revolution by which pagan Rome became Christian Rome under the emperor Constantine. And then, before the opening of the seventh seal, there appeared two separate and independent visions, which were designed to prepare the apostle for what he was about to see. The first was the vision of the four angels who stood at the four corners of the earth, restraining the four winds till the servants of God

were sealed in their foreheads. This vision we have explained as shadowing forth that period during which God mysteriously restrained the barbarians who were threatening the destruction of the Roman empire, until, through the preaching of his faithful ministers, there was a separation between mere professing Christians and true Christians. The second was the vision of the inhabitants and worship of heaven, which is contained in the concluding verses of chapter VII, and which gives us the sublimest description of the glory of the redeemed to be found in the word of God; a vision which might well strengthen the apostle's faith by assuring him that, though the church would have to pass through unparalleled trials and persecutions, yet in the end a great multitude which no man could number would stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palms of victory in their hands.

Thus far we have progressed in our exposition which has brought us down almost to the close of the fourth century, to the year 395. Just at this point, the vision which is the subject of the present lecture begins. In these verses there are the following points, which will be noticed in their order: the breaking of the seventh seal; the trumpet angels; the unavailing prayers; the preparation for sounding the trumpets; and the first trumpet.

I. We are to consider THE BREAKING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL. "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." All the seals of the mysterious volume had been broken save one. This one is now broken by the same hand which had broken the others, even by the hand of the Lamb who stood in the midst of the throne. As one seal after another was opened, and one symbol after another appeared, our interest in the unfolding history of the church and the world increases; and we would expect that when the Lamb had opened the seventh seal, some symbol, unparalleled by any which had preceded it, would appear. In this expectation, we are for a time disappointed. No horses are seen galloping over the landscape; the cry of no martyred souls is heard; no convulsion of nature darkens the sun and moon, and makes the mountains to shake. There was an awful stillness. Heaven waited with reverence, and all its inhabitants held their breath through fear. The living creatures and the elders, the angels and the redeemed watched and wondered.

What is the meaning of this impressive silence? It could not have been caused by the fear of the woes to come, for these woes had not yet been revealed, and therefore they must have been unknown even in heaven. But the preceding visions were of such a character as to lead all lookers on to expect some unusual visitation. The plot had been deepening; greater dangers were impending. Under the last seal, the mighty angels of God were seen holding back the destroying tempests until the saints of God could

be sealed and separated from the millions of false professors. Surely all spectators might well believe that when that sealing was completed, and that restraint was removed, there would be calamities without an equal and without a parallel in all the past. Therefore, there was silence in heaven, a silence of dread suspense. But this silence was not of long duration. It continued "about the space of half an hour." The apostle does not say that it was exactly half an hour, but that it was about half an hour, or that it seemed to him to be half an hour. This brief silence was calculated to prepare him and to prepare us for the wonderful symbols which were about to be revealed. It is a silence which must fill the mind with awe and kindle expectation. The redeemed cease their songs of gratitude and of love. The harpers no longer touch the strings of their golden harps. The angels stand speechless and motionless. All heaven is waiting to see what does the breaking of the seventh and last seal will let loose upon the world.

II. But John and his fellow spectators did not have to wait long. The awe-inspiring silence soon came to an end, and THE SEVEN TRUMPET ANGELS made their appearance. "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." It would seem, from the language of this verse, that these seven angels were of high rank. They are called "the seven angels which stood in the presence of God." This expression reminds us of the words of Gabriel, when he appeared to Zacharias, the father of the Baptist; "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." In both instances the language seems to indicate that the angels mentioned were called to special honor. They stood in the presence of God; they were the confidential servants and messengers of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The work of human salvation and happiness is so near the divine heart, that he commissions the highest of all the heavenly host to advance it. This would indeed be a manifestation of great love; but it pales before the fact that God gave his only begotten and well beloved Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

To the seven angels of the divine presence, seven trumpets were given; that is, one trumpet was given to each angel. By whom they were given, we are not informed, nor is it necessary for us to know; but we may suppose they were given by him who sat upon the throne, and who had in a former instance put the sealed book into the hands of the Lamb.

It will throw some light upon the imagery of the trumpets if we remember the uses to which these instruments were applied in the Jewish economy, for it is from the Jewish economy that the figures of the Apocalypse are largely drawn. The trumpets were blown on the Sabbaths, at the new moons, and on the various feast days, to indicate the progress of advancing time, and to call the people of God to their divinely appointed worship. Trumpets were

also blown in seasons of danger, to proclaim war against the enemies of Israel. Here they are used for substantially the same purposes. They were blown to proclaim great eras in the history of the world, and to call the church to the worship of its God. They were blown as a signal of battle, which might well carry terror to the enemies of the Lord. As we hear these trumpets blown, we must remember Jericho. As that city fell, so must every city, whose walls are defended by the enemies of God, fall before the trumpet blasts of the mighty angels.

III. We come now to the third point contained in the subject of the present lecture, viz., *UNAVAILING PRAYERS*. "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." Before the trumpets began to sound, the apostle saw another vision, which deserves our serious consideration, for it prepares the way for the things which are hereafter to be revealed. The scene of this vision was the heavenly temple, which, as has been said, John saw on the celestial plain, not far from the throne of God. He was so situated that he could look into its court and into the holy place. He saw an angel standing before the altar of incense with a golden censer in his hand, offering incense with the prayers of the saints. In the old economy, incense was the emblem of prayer. The meaning, then, of the vision which the apostle saw, was this: the saints of God, that is, the sealed ones who are described in the previous chapter, are earnestly engaged in prayer, and the angel offers their prayers mingled with incense to him who sits upon the throne.

But who was this incense angel? He had the golden censer, which belonged to the High Priest; he offered incense therewith, a duty which belonged to the High Priest alone. But the High Priest was a type of Christ. Therefore, we must believe that this incense angel was the angel of the everlasting covenant, the Son of God, the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, even the Lord Jesus Christ. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that none but Jesus, who is both God and man, could have received and offered up the prayers of the saints, and have made them acceptable through his intercession. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "There is but one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." The apostle, then, saw the Saviour offering the prayers of the saints before the throne. He saw the smoke of the incense ascending in the presence of God. He

does not tell us for what the saints were praying, but surely we cannot fall into error on this point. Great calamities were impending. All the signs of the times pointed to their speedy coming. The saints on the earth, if they were not blind to the plainest indications of the divine purpose, must have known that trials greater than any they had yet experienced were soon to begin. And without controversy, they would make these impending calamities the subject of earnest prayer. They would pray that these calamities might be averted; that God would interpose his almighty power, that they and their fellow-men might be delivered from threatened woes. These were the prayers which the saints were offering, and which the incense angel was presenting to God.

We would think that such prayers as these would be answered, and that the impending calamities would be turned away. But no; the wickedness of the ungodly was too great. Dire punishment must be inflicted. Though the prayers of the saints are heard, and though a blessing is vouchsafed to their suppliant souls, yet the thing they prayed for is not given. Their prayers, mighty though they are, did not avail to avert impending calamities from the earth. All this is shown to the apostle by the symbols of the same vision. The incense angel, after having offered the prayers of the saints, came out of the holy place and stood at the brazen altar of burnt offering in the court. He filled the golden censer, which he still held in his hand, with burning coals from the brazen altar, and cast it, with its flaming contents, upon the earth. Now mercy is changed into judgment. The apostle, following with his eye the censer as it fell from the angel's hand upon the earthly landscape, which was spread out far beneath him, saw great commotions where all had been quietness before. There were "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." These signs indicated that terrible destruction was about to come. The prayers of the saints could not prevail to avert it. The justice of God must go forth against the ungodly world, and the ungodly church, in which there were but one hundred and forty-four thousand worthy to carry the seal of their God in their foreheads. This vision of the incense angel, who offered his incense without avail, and who then cast his golden censer full of burning coals upon the earth, should prepare us for revelations of terrible wrath.

IV. After this preliminary vision is ended, final PREPARATION IS MADE FOR SOUNDING THE TRUMPETS. "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." It is likely that they prepared themselves by ranging themselves before the throne in the order in which they were to sound. And let it be remembered that the sounding of the seven trumpets is included in the opening of the seventh seal. If we have been correct in our exposition of the symbols of the seals, we may expect that the events shadowed forth by the trumpets will follow in chron-

ological order. We are, therefore, to turn over the pages of history subsequent to the days of Constantine, or rather to the time when the hordes of the barbarians were held back upon the frontiers of the Roman empire, as if waiting for the sealing of the saints of God, and see if there are any historical facts which bear any resemblance to the symbols which John saw and heard as one trumpet after another was blown.

Now all things are ready for the trumpet angels to sound the alarm upon the trumpets which had been given to them. The seventh seal has been opened. The inhabitants of heaven stand in silent suspense. The anxious saints have offered their unavailing prayers to avert the impending calamities. The censer of burning coals has been cast upon the earth, to indicate that the judgments of the Lord are about to begin.

V. Then "THE FIRST ANGEL SOUNDED, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." The symbols which the apostle saw at the blast of the first trumpet are plainly described. As he looked down from his high stand-point upon the plains of earth, he saw a mighty tempest. There was a storm of hail, accompanied by vivid lightning. It was like that plague of Egypt, when "the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground, and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt." This hail storm seemed to be mingled with blood. The hail-stones, lighted up by the lurid lightning, seemed to be tinged with red. This fearful tempest, as it went forth over the earth, wrought great destruction. While some of the sturdiest trees of the forest were able to stand the shock, one-third part of the trees was blown down and burned; and all the green and tender grass, which is destroyed more easily than the oaks of the mountain, was burnt up. Before the tempest, there was an Eden; after the tempest had spent its fury, there was desolation. Uprooted trees, and blackened stumps, and withered grass told of the power and marked the course of the storm of hail and lightning.

This is what John saw; and the symbols are so common and so plain that we cannot be at any loss to discover their meaning. A storm is a symbol of destruction. A hail storm, whose destructiveness is peculiarly great, must be the symbol of great destruction. Such a storm, accompanied with lightning, would add intensity to the symbol. And while the storm might be the symbol of destruction arising from any cause, yet the fact that this hail was mingled with blood, would seem to indicate that this destruction would be accomplished by the ravages of war. And the destruction was great. One-third part of the trees, the symbols of the great ones of the earth, and all the grass, the symbol of the common people, would fall before it.

These are the symbols, and these are the events which, according to the



laws of symbolical interpretation, must be prefigured by them. Are there any such events? Before we can answer this question, there is another which claims our attention, viz., at what period of the world's history are we to look for the events in which these symbols are fulfilled? It has been stated again and again, that this book is believed to be a history of the things which were to be after the days of John. We have seen, in previous lectures, how well this theory is sustained. We have traced the surprising resemblance between the symbols and the prominent events in the history of the Roman empire. We discovered the fulfillment of the sixth seal, in which the four mighty angels were seen holding back the winds that they should do no harm till the saints of God were sealed in their foreheads, in the wonderful restraint by which the hordes of the barbarians were, according to the language of the historian Gibbon, "suspended or repelled upon the frontiers" of the empire, until, by the preaching of the faithful servants of God, a separation was effected between the true church and the false. This was about A. D. 395.

If our expositions thus far have been correct, and if the seven trumpets are to follow the seven seals in chronological order, we must look for the events shadowed forth under the first trumpet about A. D. 400. Is there any event occurring at that time which is a fulfillment of the storm of hail and lightning? Let us turn to the pages of history and see. The tempest of barbarians, which up to this time was suspended or repelled upon the frontiers of the empire, was now let loose. Alaric, king of the Visigoths, at the head of his victorious armies, overran a very large part of the Roman territory. One city after another was taken; one province after another submitted to his authority. The Roman senate fled before him. Three times he besieged Rome, until, in the year 410, that city was given up to the fury of the tribes of Scythia. The historian Gibbon, who devotes one hundred pages of his history to the first Gothic invasion, describes the events of this period in such a way, that we can see how appropriate the symbols are. As the whole description cannot be quoted, a few extracts must suffice. "Theodosius \* \* \* \* died in the month of January, A. D. 395; and before the end of the winter of the same year, the Gothic nation was in arms. \* \* \* \* The barriers of the Danube were thrown open; the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests; and the uncommon severity of the winter allowed the poet to remark, 'that they rolled their ponderous wagons over the broad and icy back of the indignant river.' The unhappy natives of the provinces to the south of the Danube submitted to the calamities, which, in the course of twenty years, were almost grown familiar to their imagination; and the various troops of barbarians, who gloried in the Gothic name, were irregularly spread from the woody shores of Dalmatia to the walls of Constantinople. \* \* \* \* Alaric disdained to trample any longer on the prostrate and ruined countries of Thrace and

Dacia, and he resolved to seek a plentiful harvest of fame and riches in a province which had hitherto escaped the ravages of war." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 3, p. 190. "The apprehensions of each individual were increased in just proportion to the measure of his fortune; and the most timid, who had already embarked their most valuable effects, meditated their escape to the island of Sicily, or the African coast. The public distress was aggravated by the fears and reproaches of superstition. Every hour produced some horrid tale of strange and portentous accidents; the pagans deplored the neglect of omens, and the interruption of sacrifices; but the Christians still derived some comfort from the powerful intercession of the saints and martyrs." p. 201. "The subjects of Rome, unconscious of their approaching calamities, enjoyed the state of quiet and prosperity, which had seldom blessed the frontiers of Gaul. Their flocks and herds were permitted to graze in the pastures of the barbarians; their huntsmen penetrated, without fear or danger, into the darkest recesses of the Hercynian wood. The banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tiber, with elegant houses and well cultivated farms; and if a poet descended the river, he might express his doubt, on which side was situated the territory of the Romans. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed; and many thousand Christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. Worms perished after a long and obstinate siege; Strasburg, Spire, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, Amiens, experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke; and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them, in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars." p. 223. "While they expected in sullen silence that the barbarians should evacuate the confines of Italy, Alaric, with bold and sudden marches, passed the Alps and the Po; hastily pillaged the cities of Aquileia, Altinum, Concordia and Cremona, which yielded to his arms; increased his forces by the acquisition of thirty thousand auxiliaries, and without meeting a single enemy in the field, advanced as far as the edge of the morass which protected the impregnable residence of the emperor of the West. Instead of attempting the hopeless siege of Ravenna, the prudent leader of the Goths proceeded to Rimini, stretched his ravages along the sea coast of the Adriatic, and meditated the conquest of the ancient mistress of the world. An Italian hermit, whose zeal and sanctity were respected by the barbarians themselves, encountered the victorious monarch and boldly denounced the indignation of heaven against the oppressors of

the earth ; but the saint was himself confounded by the solemn asseveration of Alaric that he felt a secret and præternatural impulse which directed, and even compelled his march to the gates of Rome." p. 243. "By a skillful disposition of his numerous forces, who impatiently watched the moment of an assault, Alaric encompassed the walls, commanded the twelve principal gates, intercepted all communication with the adjacent country, and vigilantly guarded the navigation of the Tiber, from which the Romans derived the surest and most plentiful supply of provisions. The first emotions of the nobles and the people were those of surprise and indignation that a vile barbarian should dare to insult the capital of the world ; but their arrogance was soon humbled by misfortune. \* \* \* That unfortunate city gradually experienced the distress of scarcity, and at length the horrid calamities of famine. The daily allowance of three pounds of bread was reduced to one-half, to one-third, to nothing ; and the price of corn still continued to rise in a rapid and extravagant proportion. The poorer citizens, who were unable to purchase the necessaries of life, solicited the precarious charity of the rich ; and for a while the public misery was alleviated by the humanity of Laeta, the widow of the emperor Gratian, who had fixed her residence at Rome, and consecrated to the use of the indigent the princely revenue which she annually received from the grateful successors of her husband. But these private and temporary donatives were insufficient to appease the hunger of a numerous people ; and the progress of famine invaded the marble palaces of the senators themselves. The persons of both sexes, who had been educated in the enjoyment of ease and luxury, discovered how little is necessary to supply the demands of nature, and lavished the unavailing treasures of gold and silver to obtain the coarse and scanty sustenance which they would formerly have rejected with disdain. The food the most repugnant to sense or imagination, the aliments the most unwholesome and pernicious to the constitution, were eagerly devoured and fiercely disputed by the rage of the hungry. A dark suspicion was entertained that some desperate wretches fed on the bodies of their fellow creatures, whom they had secretly murdered ; and even mothers—such was the horrid conflict of the two most powerful instincts implanted by nature in the human breast—even mothers are said to have tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants. Many thousands of the inhabitants of Rome expired in their houses or in the streets for want of sustenance ; and as the public sepulchers without the walls were in the power of the enemy, the stench which arose from so many putrid and unburied carcasses infected the air ; and the miseries of famine were succeeded and aggravated by the contagion of a pestilential disease." p. 269. "The Roman port insensibly swelled to the size of an episcopal city, where the corn of Africa was deposited in spacious granaries for the use of the capital. As soon as Alaric was in possession of that important place, he summoned the city to surrender at discretion ;

and his demands were enforced by the positive declaration that a refusal, or even a delay, should be instantly followed by the destruction of the magazines, on which the life of the Roman people depended. The clamors of that people and the terrors of famine subdued the pride of the senate; they listened without reluctance to the proposal of placing a new emperor on the throne of the unworthy Honorius." p. 278. "The king of the Goths, who no longer dissembled his appetite for plunder and revenge, appeared (for the third time) in arms under the walls of the capital; and the trembling senate, without any hopes of relief, prepared, by a desperate resistance, to delay the ruin of their country. But they were unable to guard against the secret conspiracy of the slaves and domestics, who either from birth or interest were attached to the cause of the enemy. At the hour of midnight the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia." p. 282.

## LECTURE XXIII.

### THE SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH TRUMPETS.

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!—REV. 8:8-18.

THE first angel had sounded, and John saw a destructive tempest sweep over the earthly landscape. That tempest has been explained as prefiguring the Gothic invasion under the leadership of Alaric; an invasion which involved a third part of the Roman empire in ruins, and which was brought to an end by the death of the Gothic chieftain in the year 410. After the first trumpet had sounded, and the destructive tempest had passed,

I. THE SECOND TRUMPET sounded, and other symbols, no less expressive and startling, presented themselves to the entranced apostle. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea : and the third part of the sea became blood ; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died ; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

In explaining these verses, and the verses which follow, we will pursue our usual plan. We will first describe the symbols and explain their meaning ; and then see whether they have any fulfillment in the history of the world. When the second angel blew his trumpet, what did the apostle see ? Let it be remembered that the scene of this vision is the same as that of the preceding one. It was on the plains of earth, which we have all along supposed to represent the Roman empire. When the second angel blew his trumpet, John saw a great mountain cast into the sea. The storm of the preceding vision had swept over the land and destroyed the forests and the pastures ; but in this vision the destruction is to visit the sea. A mountain is a symbol of strength ; and hence it is used by both inspired and uninspired writers as a symbol of a powerful kingdom. But the mountain which the apostle saw in his vision was a burning mountain. This does not mean that the mountain was itself being consumed, or that the woods which covered its sides were on fire. It was a volcanic mountain, which was continually pouring out streams of lava, and yet was not itself consumed ; a mountain which was an instrument of destruction to all surrounding it, and yet was not itself destroyed. Such a volcanic mountain would then be a symbol of some mighty nation which was continually sending forth its desolating armies like streams of red-hot lava, and destroying every living thing by which it was surrounded. And this volcanic mountain was cast into the sea. We can imagine how the seething sea would boil like a pot as its waters closed over the burning mountain, and how its billows, excited by the fall of this mighty mass, would roll on, engulfing vessels, sweeping over islands, and dashing in destructive fury upon the shores. This symbol teaches us that the mighty nation, shadowed forth by the burning mountain, would expend its destructive energies upon the sea, upon the commerce which whitened the sea with its sails, and upon the islands and the countries whose shores were washed by the sea. And it would seem that this fearful destruction would be accomplished by the ravages of war, for the third part of the sea became blood. When the blazing mountain was cast into the sea, it would by its reflection seem to tinge the waters with red, so that they would become as blood to the looker on. This symbol would be fulfilled if the mighty nation, shadowed forth by the burning mountain, should engage in naval warfare, lay waste the islands, destroy the seaports with terrible slaughter, and in desperate naval battles tinge the sea with the blood of its enemies. The symbol further

teaches us that the destruction would be great. One-third part of the living creatures which were in the sea would die, and one-third part of the ships would be destroyed. We can therefore expect to find the fulfillment of this symbol only in events which involve great loss of human life and great detriment to the pursuits of commerce.

These were the symbols which John saw when the second angel sounded his alarm upon his trumpet; and these are the events which these symbols seem naturally to prefigure. He saw an active volcano cast into the sea; he saw the seething waves swallowing up vessels and cities and men, until they seemed to be saturated with the blood of the slain. The laws of symbolic interpretation, which have guided us this far in our exposition, would lead us to expect that some mighty nation would make its appearance about this time, and that it would successfully direct its destructive energies, not against the inland parts of the Roman empire as the Goths under Alaric had done, but against the sea, and the sea coasts, and the islands of the sea. We would expect that this destruction would be visited upon the Mediterranean sea, for this was the main sea within the broad confines of the empire. Of course there were other seas of no little note in history, but the Mediterranean sea is so wrapped up in the history of the Roman world that it deserves the name of *the sea*. We would also expect to find the fulfillment of these symbols soon after the death of Alaric and the end of the first Gothic invasion.

Are there any such events as are shadowed forth by these symbols? and do these events occur at the time and in the place these symbols would lead us to expect? We take up the history of the Roman empire, we read its pages, and we are compelled to say, with surprise and wonder, that there are such events. Between the years 428 and 468, the Roman kingdom was smitten with the second blow, which was no less severe than that which it received from the first Gothic invasion, and which had much to do in hastening its decline and fall. There was a nation, Vandals they are called in history, a name which, in the language of every civilized people, has become a synonym for barbarity and destruction, either descended from the same stock as the Goths, or closely allied to them. Their home was in the neighborhood of the Baltic sea. But years before the time referred to in the present lecture, they had been crowded out of their native province by other barbarian tribes, and had journeyed toward the West. They passed slowly through the Ukraine and what is now called Germany; they tarried awhile in France; they overran the fertile country of Spain. During all this time they had been increasing in numbers and in military skill. Just about the time supposed to be described under the second trumpet, that is, in the years 429 and 430, they crossed the straits of Gibraltar and made a complete conquest of the Roman provinces in Northern Africa. Their king at this time was Genseric, "a name which, in the destruction

of the Roman empire," I quote the language of Gibbon, "deserves equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila." This mighty chieftain, having conquered the African provinces, looked about him for other lands to conquer. Towards the south, in the burning and barren deserts of Central Africa, there was nothing to tempt his ambition or cupidity. Towards the north, there was the Mediterranean sea; but beyond it, and all along its coasts, there were rich countries and cities. His resolution was soon taken. Navies were builded. And sailing out every year, he destroyed commerce, he laid waste the islands, he pillaged the cities along the sea coast, he captured Rome itself, and gave it up for fourteen days to the licentious fury of his followers. He never ventured far from his ships, but for nearly forty years he was the master of the sea and the terror of all the maritime cities. The Roman government once and again gathered a naval force, but they could make no headway against him. By his courage and caution, the fleets of his enemies were destroyed, and there was none to question his title, "the ruler of the sea."

To prove that this is a correct description, I refer again to the testimony of Gibbon. Only a few extracts from the many pages which he devotes to the history of the Vandals, and of Genseric, their king, can be quoted: "The Vandals and Alani, who followed the successful standard of Genseric, had acquired a rich and fertile territory, which stretched along the coast above ninety days' journey from Tangier to Tripoli; but their narrow limits were pressed and confined, on either side, by the sandy desert and the Mediterranean. The discovery and conquest of the black nations that might dwell beneath the torrid zone could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric; but he cast his eyes toward the sea; he resolved to create a naval power, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance. The woods of Mount Atlas afforded an inexhaustible nursery of timber; his new subjects were skilled in the arts of navigation and ship-building; he animated his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare which would render every maritime country accessible to their arms; the Moors and Africans were allured by the hopes of plunder; and, after an interval of six centuries, the fleets that issued from the port of Carthage again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean." Vol. 3, p. 459. "Genseric boldly advanced from the port of Ostia to the gates of the defenceless city. Instead of a sally of the Roman youth, there issued from the gates an unarmed and venerable procession of the bishop at the head of his clergy. \* \* \* Rome and its inhabitants were delivered to the licentiousness of the Vandals and Moors, whose blind passions revenged the injuries of Carthage. The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights; and all that remained of public or private wealth, of sacred or profane treasure, was diligently transported to the vessels of Genseric. Among the spoils, the splendid relics of two temples, or rather of two religions, ex-

hibited a memorable example of the vicissitudes of human and divine things. Since the abolition of paganism, the capitol had been violated and abandoned; yet the statues of the gods and heroes were still respected, and the curious roof of gilt bronze was reserved for the rapacious hands of Genseric." p. 463. "The kingdom of Italy, a name to which the Western empire was gradually reduced, was afflicted, under the reign of Ricimer, by the incessant depredations of the Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year, they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage; and Genseric himself, though in a very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions. His designs were concealed with impenetrable secrecy, till the moment that he hoisted sail. When he was asked by his pilot what course he should steer, 'leave the determination to the winds,' replied the barbarian with pious arrogance, 'they will transport us to the guilty coast, whose inhabitants have provoked the Divine displeasure'; but if Genseric himself deigned to issue more precise orders, he judged the most wealthy to be the most criminal. The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Lucania, Brittium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece and Sicily; they were tempted to subdue the island of Sardinia, so advantageously placed in the centre of the Mediterranean; and their arms spread desolation or terror, from the columns of Hercules to the mouth of the Nile. As they were more ambitious of spoil than of glory, they seldom attacked any fortified cities, or engaged any regular troops in the open field. But the celerity of their motions enabled them, almost at the same time, to threaten and attack the most distant objects which attracted their desires; and as they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, they had no sooner landed than they swept the dismayed country with a body of light cavalry." p. 486.

Does not this description agree with the symbols which John saw? If it had been his design to describe, in symbolical language, the warlike movements and naval victories of the Vandals under Genseric, could he have chosen more expressive symbols than these: A burning mountain was cast into the sea and one-third part of the ships were destroyed?

II. We come now to the sounding of THE THIRD TRUMPET. "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." As under the previous trumpets, so now, a natural phenomenon appeared as the symbol. When the first trumpet was blown, there was a hail storm, accompanied with lightning; when the second trumpet was blown, there was a volcano cast into the sea; and now, when the third trumpet is blown, a blazing meteor



is seen falling from the sky, for every one who has ever seen a meteor will at once recognize the beauty and faithfulness of the description: "there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp." A star is the emblem of a ruler. It is so used in all languages. And in all languages a falling star, or rather a blazing meteor, is an emblem of some mighty warrior, who suddenly appears before men in the midst of his splendid career, astonishes all by his brilliant daring, carries terror and destruction, and then suddenly disappears. The reason of this is obvious. Such a warrior resembles a meteor because he appears suddenly, because his course cannot be determined by any known laws, because he excites consternation and alarm, and because, in the opinion of men, he is an instrument of the Divine displeasure. We may therefore expect the symbol which John saw to shadow forth one of those scourges of the human race, who, after a brief and brilliant career, goes out in darkness. This blazing meteor fell upon the rivers and fountains of waters. In order to understand this part of the symbol, we must remember the places visited by the destruction under the previous trumpets. Under the first trumpet, the storm fell upon the forests and the grass. This prefigured the calamities which were to come upon the inland parts of the empire. Under the second trumpet, the burning mountain fell into the sea. This prefigured the calamities which were to come upon the maritime parts of the empire. Under the third trumpet, the blazing mountain fell upon the rivers and fountains of waters. This would prefigure the calamities which were to come upon those parts of the empire in which rivers abound, and in which rivers take their rise. Therefore, in looking for the fulfillment of this symbol, we must expect to find it, not in the more inland parts of the empire, nor yet on the sea or on the sea coast, but in those regions which lay along the great rivers. The name of this falling star was Wormwood, a well known bitter herb. Wormwood is an emblem of sore and bitter affliction. This star, falling into the waters, poisoned them, so that great multitudes died. It is not difficult to understand this part of the symbol. The wars of the conqueror, shadowed forth by the blazing star, would be attended with great loss of life. The destruction would be as great as it would be in a land in which the rivers and the fountains were turned into wormwood.

These were the symbols which John saw at the blast of the third trumpet: A blazing meteor, whose name was Wormwood, shot across the sky, and falling into the rivers changed them into wormwood, so that multitudes died by reason of the poisoned waters. And these are the events which the laws of symbolic interpretation would lead us to expect: Some fierce warrior would suddenly appear, carry destruction into certain parts of the empire, and having quickly run his course, would suddenly disappear. Are there such events to be found recorded on the pages of history? I answer, without hesitation, there are. Taking it for granted

that the first trumpet referred to Alaric and the Goths, and that the second trumpet referred to Genseric and the Vandals, the third trumpet would refer to the next great event in the downfall of the empire. That event was the invasion of the Huns, under Attila, their king. This man, who has been called "the scourge of God," was cotemporary with Genseric, but he exerted his destructive energies in a different part of the empire. His subjects thought him more than man, and the historian says they "would not presume to gaze with steady eye upon what they deemed his divine majesty." About the year 450, Attila and his victorious Huns moved along the Danube, wasting and depopulating its banks. They next poured down the Rhine, leaving its fair valley a scene of desolation and woe, and reducing to ashes all its beautiful cities. Here they suffered defeat, with the loss of three hundred thousand men. But Attila soon rallied his forces and pushed his armies across the Alps, and filled all Northern Italy with destruction. All the streams of water which flowed from the mountains were turned into wormwood, and all the cities which stood beside those streams drank of the poisoned water and died. Suddenly, and apparently without cause, the conqueror returns, recrosses the Danube, and is struck dead with apoplexy. Like a meteor he went forth, like a meteor he filled the hearts of men with consternation, like a meteor he went out in darkness; and the empire of the Huns was forever extinguished.

To show that this is a correct sketch of the career of Attila, I will quote a few extracts from the pages of Gibbon. "The crowd of vulgar kings, the leaders of so many martial tribes, who served under the standard of Attila, were ranged in the submissive order of guards and domestics round the person of their master. They watched his nod; they trembled at his frown, and at the first signal of his will, they executed without murmur or hesitation his stern and absolute commands. In time of peace, the dependent princes, with their national troops, attended the royal camp in regular succession; but when Attila collected his military force he was able to bring into the field an army of five, or, according to another account, of seven hundred thousand barbarians." Vol. 3, p. 892. "From the royal village, in the plains of Hungary, his standard moved towards the west; and after a march of seven or eight hundred miles, he reached the conflux of the Rhine and the Neckar, where he was joined by the Franks, who adhered to his ally, the elder of the sons of Clodion. \* \* \* The hostile myriads were poured with resistless violence into the Belgic provinces. The consternation of Gaul was universal; and the various fortunes of its cities have been adorned by tradition with martyrdoms and miracles. \* \* \* From the Rhine and the Moselle, Attila advanced into the heart of Gaul; crossed the Seine at Auxerre; and, after a long and laborious march, fixed his camp under the walls of Orleans." p. 433. "Neither the spirit, nor the force, nor the reputation of Attila were impaired by the failure of

the Gallic expedition. In the ensuing spring, he repeated his demand of the Princess Honoria, and her patrimonial treasures. The demand was again rejected or eluded; and the indignant lover again took the field, passed the Alps, invaded Italy, and besieged Aquileia with an innumerable host of barbarians." p. 443. "The succeeding generation could hardly discover the ruins of Aquileia. After this dreadful chastisement, Attila pursued his march; and as he passed, the cities of Altinum, Concordia and Padua were reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. The inland towns, Vicenza, Verona and Bergamo were exposed to the rapacious cruelty of the Huns. Milan and Pavia submitted, without resistance, to the loss of their wealth; and applauded the usual clemency which preserved from the flames the public as well as private buildings, and spared the lives of the captive multitude. The popular traditions of Comum, Turin, or Modena, may justly be suspected; yet they concur with more authentic evidence to prove that Attila spread his ravages over the rich plains of modern Lombardy, which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and Apennines. When he took possession of the royal palace of Milan, he was surprised and offended at the sight of a picture which represented the Cæsars seated on their throne, and the princes of Scythia prostrate at their feet. The revenge which Attila inflicted on this monument of Roman vanity was harmless and ingenious. He commanded a painter to reverse the figures and the attitudes; and the emperors were delineated on the same canvas approaching in a suppliant posture to empty their bags of tributary gold before the throne of the Scythian monarch." p. 445.

These extracts show with what propriety Attila, the king of the Huns, who said of himself that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse trod, is shadowed forth by the blazing meteor which the apostle saw falling from heaven upon the fountains of water.

III. We come now to the sounding of THE FOURTH TRUMPET. "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

The sun, moon and stars are the natural emblems of rulers or governments. I need not refer to examples, for they will readily suggest themselves. We have had several examples in our previous lectures. When the fourth trumpet sounded, the lights in the firmament were partially darkened, a symbol which indicated that the power of the rulers was greatly weakened and that the government was about to come to an end. And how was this symbol fulfilled? One blow after another had fallen upon the Roman empire. One province after another had been overrun by the Goths and left a desert. Its maritime possessions, its fleets and its

commerce had been annihilated by the Vandals. Its fertile valleys along its rivers had been laid waste by the Huns. But as yet the emperors had not been touched. Little remained of the once magnificent Roman empire but the vain titles of sovereignty, and these were now to be taken away. Its sun, and its moon, and its stars were to be darkened.

How this was done is plainly revealed in history. Odoacer, at the head of the Heruli, marches into the very heart of Italy, and commands that the office of the Roman emperor should be abolished. His command was obeyed. The last phantom of a Roman emperor abdicated, a barbarian reigned in Rome, and the Western empire was among the things of the past. This occurred in the year 479. I need read but a few extracts from history to show that the symbols of the fourth trumpet were fulfilled in Odoacer and the Heruli. "Odoacer led a wandering life among the barbarians of Noricum, with a mind and a fortune suited to the most desperate adventures; and when he had fixed his choice, he piously visited the cell of Severinus, the popular saint of the country, to solicit his approbation and blessing. The lowness of the door would not admit the lofty stature of Odoacer; he was obliged to stoop; but in that humble attitude the saint could discern the symptoms of his future greatness; and addressing him in a prophetic tone, 'Pursue,' said he, 'your design; proceed to Italy; you will soon cast away this coarse garment of skins; and your wealth will be adequate to the liberality of your mind.' The barbarian, whose daring spirit accepted and ratified the prediction, was admitted into the service of the Western empire, and soon obtained an honorable rank in the guards. His manners were gradually polished, his military skill was improved, and the confederates of Italy would not have elected him for their general, unless the exploits of Odoacer had established a high opinion of his courage and capacity. Their military acclamations saluted him with the title of king; but he abstained, during his whole reign, from the use of the purple and diadem, lest he should offend those princes whose subjects, by their accidental mixture, had formed the victorious army which time and policy might insensibly unite into a great nation. Royalty was familiar to the barbarians, and the submissive people of Italy was prepared to obey, without a murmur, the authority which he should condescend to exercise as the vicegerent of the emperor of the West. But Odoacer had resolved to abolish that useless and expensive office; and such is the weight of antique prejudice, that it required some boldness and penetration to discover the extreme facility of the enterprise. The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace; he signified his resignation to the senate; and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom and the forms of the constitution." Vol. 3, p. 511. "Odoacer was the first barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their just superiority above the rest of mankind. The disgrace

of the Romans still excites our respectful compassion, and we fondly sympathize with the imaginary grief and indignation of their degenerate posterity. But the calamities of Italy had gradually subdued the proud consciousness of freedom and glory. In the age of Roman virtue, the provinces were subject to the arms, and the citizens to the laws, of the republic; till those laws were subverted by civil discord, and both the city and the provinces became the servile property of a tyrant." p. 515.

Thus I have endeavored to show that the first four trumpets found their fulfillment in the four barbarian invasions by which the Roman empire was subverted. Every one must acknowledge that there is a wonderful resemblance between the symbols which the apostle saw and the events recorded in history. The mighty storm of hail shadows forth Alaric and the Goths; the burning volcano shadows forth Genseric and the Vandals; the blazing meteor shadows forth Attila and the Huns; the darkening of the sun, the moon and the stars, was accomplished by Odoacer and the Hernli, by whom the last vestiges of the sovereignty of the Roman empire were swept away. I cannot conclude this part of my exposition better than by quoting a few of Gibbon's reflections on the fall of the empire. "I have now accomplished the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from the fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines to its total extinction in the west, about five centuries after the Christian era. At that unhappy period, the Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain; Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and Burgundians: Africa was exposed to the cruel persecution of the Vandals, and the savage insults of the Moors; Rome and Italy, as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an army of barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by the reign of Theodoric, the Ostrogoth. All the subjects of the empire, who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe. The majesty of Rome was faintly represented by the princes of Constantinople, the feeble and imaginary successors of Augustus. Yet they continued to reign over the east, from the Danube to the Nile and Tigris; the Gothic and Vandal kingdoms of Italy and Africa were subverted by the arms of Justinian; and the history of the Greek emperors may still afford a long series of instructive lessons and interesting revolutions." Vol. 3, p. 631. "The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance; and the barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome." p. 642.

IV. These calamities which have been described were indeed terrible, but they were only the beginning of sorrows. More fearful horrors were yet to descend upon the world. After the echoes of the fourth trumpet had died away, and before the fifth trumpet sounded, ANOTHER VISION appeared to the apostle, filled with warning of coming woe. "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound." On this vision we have no need to dwell. Its meaning is obvious. Greater woes than any which had yet been were about to be. And the angel is sent forth to proclaim the fact, and to prepare John and the inhabitants of the earth for those judgments of the Lord, which were to follow when the other three angels sounded the alarm on the trumpets which had been given to them. While we are waiting for the sounding of the woe-trumpets, and for the symbols which are then to be revealed, we may well be thankful that our lot has been cast in more peaceful times, and that in the midst of all the commotions of the earth, God sits on his throne and makes all things work together for good to them that love him. The world's history would be a strange mingling of unaccountable accidents, if we were not able to see by the eye of faith, written on every page, this glorious truth: "God reigneth; let the earth be glad."

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## LECTURE XXIV.

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### THE FIFTH TRUMPET.

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. —REV. 9: 1-11.

WE come now to the sounding of the first of the woe-trumpets, so called because of the fearful woe proclaimed by the flying angel to the inhabitants of the world by reason of the trumpets which were yet to sound.

I. In explaining this trumpet, I will, in the first place, give A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WHAT JOHN SAW. In giving this description I will use the simplest language. We have become so familiar with the stately language of our version, cumbered as it sometimes is with an exact literalness, that we fail in appreciating its full beauty and understanding its full meaning. Let us then, in the spirit, put ourselves beside the apostle as he stands on the celestial plain, and hear what he heard, and see what he saw. The fifth angel sounds his trumpet, and lo, a blazing meteor shoots across the sky and falls upon the earth. This blazing meteor is unlike the one which made its appearance under the third trumpet. That remained a meteor through the whole vision; this one is quickly seen to be a person, for he is spoken of as a man; to him was given a key; and he did things which only an intelligent being could perform. Therefore, when the fifth trumpet sounds, we are to see a man, falling like a blazing meteor from heaven, a man destined to exert a great influence over the affairs of men.

We look again, and we see the mouth of a great pit, which seems to be bottomless. It appears like a vast cave, reaching to the very centre of the earth; and its entrance is closed by a massive door, securely locked. The key of this door is given to him whose meteor-like fall has attracted our attention. He opens the door, and up from that open door there comes a stifling smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, which ascends higher and higher, and spreads wider and wider, till the whole atmosphere is blackened and the sun no longer shines. From the midst of this smoke there came a swarm of living creatures, which resembled locusts in some respects, and in other respects they resembled scorpions. But they were not locusts, nor yet were they scorpions. Locusts, that terrible plague of the Orient, destroyed everything before them. But it was commanded these living creatures, and this command was no doubt given by him who sat upon the throne, that they should not hurt grass, or tree, or any green thing. Their mission was not against the vegetable kingdom—it was against men. Nor was it against all men, but only against such as did not have the seal of God in their foreheads. Nor were they permitted to take life; they were only to torment the dwellers on the earth with a torment like that which is produced by the painful sting of a scorpion. Nor was this torment to continue for an indefinite time; it was limited to a space of five months. But this torment, though it was not suffered to extend to the life, and though it was limited in its duration, produced such horrible agony, that men were willing to welcome the coming of death as their only relief. We look again, and examine more closely the appearance of the

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living creatures, and we find that in shape they are like horses arrayed in warlike trappings. They have on their heads something which resembles crowns of gold. They have the faces of men, the hair of women, the teeth of lions, breastplates of iron, and the tails of scorpions with poisonous stings. When they go forth, it is with a mighty noise like that of martial chariots rushing to battle. Over them was a king, even he who had unlocked the bottomless pit, and who is here called "the angel of the bottomless pit," "Abaddon," and "Apollyon."

This was what the apostle saw. Let us get it clearly fixed in our minds, without any reference to the events which these symbols may shadow forth. When we get it thus fixed, we may perhaps be able to interpret it. These symbols are indeed startling and sublime, and we have a right to expect that some great and important events in the history of the world are prefigured by them.

II. Let us now take up these symbols one by one, explain THEIR MEANING, and see if we can discover what events in history they are designed to symbolize. In considering the symbols, I will speak of them under these four heads, viz.: the person described as opening the bottomless pit; his followers; their commission; and their appearance.

1. We are to consider *the person* described as opening the bottomless pit. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." It may be remarked here that the fifth trumpet is supposed to shadow forth the career of Mohammed and the progress of that false religion of which he was the founder and the prophet. On this point, all the expositors who adopt the historical interpretation of this book are agreed. This agreement is not to be wondered at, for the symbols seem so plainly to point at Mohammed and Mohammedanism, that they cannot be mistaken. According to this theory the false prophet is described as a star falling from heaven upon the earth; that is, as a meteor. Every one acquainted with the history of Mohammed must see that a meteor is an appropriate symbol. He suddenly burst out in the eastern sky in the darkness of the spiritual night; he astonished all by his brilliancy; his course could not be predicted by any known laws; neither before his day, nor since, has any followed in his steps. To him was given the key of the bottomless pit. The phrase, "the bottomless pit," has a fixed meaning in the New Testament. It describes the place of the lost, the abode of Satan, from which evil influences and evil spirits are continually ascending, which would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Every false religion which leads men away from the true God and his Son, Jesus Christ, may



be regarded as taking its rise in the bottomless pit. Every false religion may be regarded as the invention of Satan, who, having invented it, finds human instrumentalities to do his work, and they do it under the permission of the Supreme Ruler of the universe. This is the meaning of that part of the symbol which describes the false prophet as having received the key of the bottomless pit, and having opened the bottomless pit. God, in infinite wisdom, gave him permission to let loose upon the world a system of faith which had its origin in the bottomless pit and in the cunning of Satan. This system of faith is described as a smoke, like the smoke of a great furnace. This is certainly an expressive emblem of the false faith. It obscures the light of the true sun; it darkens the air, so that men go stumbling all their days; it shrouds everything that is pure and beautiful with its dismal covering. While such a smoke is an appropriate emblem of every false religion which has ever made its appearance on the earth, it is an especially appropriate emblem of the Mohammedan religion. It came up rapidly; it spread in all directions; it covered a very considerable portion of the world like a pall, and under shadow of its darkness unnumbered thousands have gone down to the power of an endless death.

I can but mention the fact, though it may be that the symbol has no reference to it, that Mohammed, while maturing his plans for founding a new religion, retired to a cave in the vicinity of Mecca. May it not be that this cave, which stretched back and down into the earth for an unknown distance, and in which the Mohammedan religion took its rise, was shadowed forth by the entrance of the bottomless pit, which the apostle saw in his vision?

This is the first part of the symbol. It certainly seems to prefigure the false prophet. No figurative language could better paint his career and his mission. He came forth like a blazing meteor. Permission was given him to let loose from the bottomless pit a pestilent form of religion, which has covered no small part of our earth, shrouded many immortal souls in darkness, and eclipsed the light of the sun of righteousness, which alone can illumine the world.

2. We are to consider the second part of the symbol, viz., *the followers of the false prophet*. "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power." These followers are described as coming out of the smoke. This symbolizes the fact, which cannot be questioned, that the armies which marched under the standard of Mohammed were the outcome of his false religion. If it had not been for the system of faith which he framed, these armies would never have had an existence, and their mighty conquests, which wrought such changes in history, would have been impossible. As, then, the smoke which ascended from the pit symbolized the doctrine of Mohammed, so the living creatures, which came out of the

smoke, symbolized the hosts to which that doctrine gave birth. These hosts are compared to locusts. It is not necessary to delay our exposition with any discussion of the natural history of the locusts. A few words will remind us of all we need to know in order to understand the symbol. The locusts, which have wrought such destruction in some parts of our own land, were one of the most terrible scourges of the East. They came in vast swarms, and devoured everything before them; they destroyed all vegetation; they reduced clothing and leather to shreds; and the ancient naturalist does not exaggerate when he says that they consumed even the doors of the houses. Locusts are therefore expressive symbols of mighty armies. This symbol is used both in the word of God and by profane writers. Every one who is acquainted with the career of Mohammed and his successors, must see the propriety of this emblem in the present instance. Though at first the false prophet could persuade but a few to enroll themselves as his followers, after a few years thousands flocked to his standard. Under his generals and successors, millions, who could be compared to nothing but swarms of locusts, marched over some of the fairest portions of the earth. These armies are fitly compared to locusts, not only because of their numbers, but also because of their destructiveness. This characteristic is also symbolized by the fact that the living creatures of the vision resembled scorpions. The sting of the scorpion, another pest of the Orient, was much dreaded. Though it was not always fatal, yet it was extremely irritating and painful. These living creatures, therefore, which seemed to partake of the nature both of locusts and scorpions, and which we might call scorpion-locusts, are the appropriate symbols of a great army, destroying the fruits of industry, and stinging the inhabitants of the world to madness. This symbol is fulfilled in the hosts which marched forth to perpetuate the religion of Mohammed. As we have seen, they were in number almost numberless. And though they were not distinguished for cruelty, yet the destruction and misery they caused can never be told. Let me confirm these statements by quoting two extracts from Gibbon's history. "In the ten years of the administration of Omar, the Saracens reduced to his obedience thirty-six thousand cities or castles, destroyed four thousand churches or temples of the unbelievers, and edified fourteen hundred mosques for the exercise of the religion of Mohammed. One hundred years after his flight from Mecca, the arms and the reign of his successors extended from India to the Atlantic ocean, over the various and distant provinces, which may be comprised under the names of 1, Persia; 2, Syria; 3, Egypt; 4, Africa; and 5, Spain." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 5, p. 174. "At the end of the first century of the Hegira, the Caliphs were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe. Their prerogative was not circumscribed, either in right or in fact, by the power of the nobles, the freedom of the commons, the privileges of the church, the votes of a senate, or the memory of a free constitution. The authority of the

companions of Mohammed expired with their lives; and the chiefs or emirs of the Arabian tribes left behind, in the desert, the spirit of equality and independence. The regal and sacerdotal characters were united in the successors of Mohammed; and if the Koran was the rule of their actions, they were the supreme judges and interpreters of that divine book. They reigned by the right of conquest over the nations of the East, to whom the name of liberty was unknown, and who were accustomed to applaud in their tyrants the acts of violence and severity that were exercised at their own expense. Under the last of the Ommiades, the Arabian empire extended two hundred days' journey from east to west, from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic ocean. And if we retrench the sleeve of the robe, as it is styled by their writers, the long and narrow province of Africa, the solid and compact dominion from Fargana to Aden, from Tarsus to Surat, will spread on every side to the measure of four or five months of the march of a caravan. We should vainly seek the indissoluble union and easy obedience that pervaded the government of Augustus and the Antonines; but the progress of the Mohammedan religion diffused over this ample space a general resemblance of manners and opinions. The language and laws of the Koran were studied with equal devotion at Samarcand and Seville; the Moor and the Indian embraced as countrymen and brothers in the pilgrimage of Mecca; and the Arabian language was adopted as the popular idiom in all the provinces to the westward of the Tigris." p. 271.

3. We are to consider the third part of the symbol, viz.: *the commission* which these scorpion-locusts received. "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." From these verses it appears that the scorpion-locusts were not to injure the grass or any green thing; they were to go against men, but only against those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; and even these they might not kill, but only torment; and that only for the space of five months. But the torment, though it came short of taking life, was so great that men would wish to die.

All these things are strangely fulfilled in the Mohammedan armies. The instructions of one of Mohammed's successors, instructions which embrace the teachings of the prophet himself, will show their fulfillment better than any words of mine could do. "Remember that you are always in the presence of God, on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgment, and the hope of paradise. Avoid injustice and oppression, consult with

your brethren, and study to preserve the love and confidence of your troops. When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs ; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women or children. Destroy no palm trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way ; let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 5, p. 189.

It is to be remembered that the great doctrine of the false prophet was, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet," and that he felt it was his great mission to exterminate idolatry from the world. It is also to be remembered that at this time the greater proportion of the members of the Christian church were idolaters, the worshipers of images and of saints. His mission would not, therefore, be so much against true Christians, those who had the seal of God in their foreheads, for they, like himself, were believers in one God. It is also to be remembered that the object to be gained in every Mohammedan expedition was not so much spoil as the conversion of men to the Mohammedan faith. And though, of course, many lives were lost, yet Mohammed and his successors offered life and liberty to their enemies on condition that they would embrace the religion of Mecca. But though their mission was not to kill and destroy, but to make converts, yet men were troubled and tormented by their expeditions, until, if the matter had been left to themselves, many would have chosen death rather than life. All this requires no proof, for it is the inevitable consequence of war.

This power of tormenting the world continued for five months. Inspiration itself has told us that in prophetic language a day represents a natural year. Five prophetic months would therefore represent one hundred and fifty natural years. And it is a remarkable fact that the Mohammedan power manifested its aggressiveness for one hundred and fifty years, when it sunk into a supineness from which it has never aroused. The hegira, or flight of Mohammed from Mecca, from which Mohammedans reckon their dates as we do from the birth of Christ, took place in the year 622. From that time, as we have seen, his religion spread with great rapidity. If we consider the hegira as the beginning of the Mohammedan power, the space of one hundred and fifty years would carry us to the year 772. Let us turn to history and see whether there was any change in the practice and policy of Mohammedanism about this time. The whole matter is briefly stated by Gibbon. Speaking of one of the Caliphs, who began to reign in the year 755, and who continued to reign for fifty years, the historian says : "The luxury of the Caliphs, so useless to their private

happiness, relaxed the nerves and terminated the progress of the Arabian empire. Temporal and spiritual conquest had been the sole occupation of the first successors of Mohammed; and after supplying themselves with the necessaries of life, the whole revenue was scrupulously devoted to that salutary work. The Abbassides were impoverished by the multitude of their wants and their contempt of economy. Instead of pursuing the great object of ambition, their leisure, their affections, the powers of their mind, were diverted by pomp and pleasure; the rewards of valor were embezzled by women and eunuchs, and the royal camp was encumbered by the luxury of the palace. A similar temper was diffused among the subjects of the Caliph. Their stern enthusiasm was softened by time and prosperity; they sought riches in the occupations of industry, fame in the pursuits of literature, and happiness in the tranquility of domestic life. War was no longer the passion of the Saracens; and the increase of pay, the repetition of donatives, were insufficient to allure the posterity of those voluntary champions who had crowded to the standard of Abubeker and Omar for the hopes of spoil and of Paradise." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 5, p. 299.

Thus it seems, on the evidence of Gibbon, who certainly did not wish to confirm the truth of prophecy, that the Mohammedan power, having tormented men for five prophetic months, or one hundred and fifty natural years, became enervated by prosperity and luxury, and ceased its aggressive warfares and remained contented with the laurels and the converts it had already won. The scorpion-locusts sheathed their stings and tormented men no more.

4. We are to consider the fourth part of the symbol, viz., *the appearance of the scorpion-locusts*. "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." The scorpion-locusts resembled horses prepared for battle. This shadows forth the fact that the armies of the Saracens were largely composed of cavalry. Without question, they were indebted for many of their victories to their skill in horsemanship. These scorpion-locusts had on their heads not crowns of gold, but as it were crowns of gold. This shadows forth the jeweled turbans which the Saracens were accustomed to wear. They had the faces of men; that is, they did not have faces smoothly

shaven, but with full beards, which the Saracens counted a glory. They had the hair of women, that is, long and flowing locks, such as women among the Romans and Greeks were accustomed to wear. They had also the teeth of lions, shadowing forth their destructiveness. They had breastplates of iron; that is, they were incased in armor. When they went forth, it was as the sound of an army marching to battle. They had the tails and stings of scorpions, symbols which have already been explained. The duration of their power was limited to five prophetic months, or one hundred and fifty natural years, a period during which, as we have seen, the Mohammedans carried on an aggressive warfare. They had a king over them, even the angel of the bottomless pit; that is, Mohammed, or the spirit of the Mohammedan religion, who is called Abaddon in Hebrew, and Apollyon in Greek, or being interpreted, the "destroyer," a name which every one acquainted with the career of the false prophet will recognize as in the highest degree appropriate.

These considerations show with what propriety the fifth trumpet is referred to the Arabian hordes under Mohammed and his successors. If John had chosen to describe this portion of history in symbolical language, could he have found, in all the realms of nature, any more appropriate symbol than these scorpion-locusts, in appearance like horses, with turban-crowned heads, with the bearded faces of men, with the flowing hair of women, with the teeth of lions, with breastplates of iron, and with a leader whose name was the destroyer? The language is symbolical, but its meaning is too plain to be misunderstood. Suppose some historian had used the following words: "At this time arose the empire of the Saracens, who issued from the deserts of Arabia in countless myriads like an army of locusts, and spread desolation and ruin over the Eastern world. They joined the intelligence of men with the ferocity of beasts, and the effeminacy of women with the courage of the lion. With their horses sheathed in armor, and turbans on their heads, they passed rapidly from nation to nation, striking them as with a scorpion's sting, leaving some to perish and others to writhe in torment." Would any have misunderstood these words? And yet these are almost the words of inspiration, which we have been considering.

## LECTURE XXV.

## THE SIXTH TRUMPET.

One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.—REV. 9: 12-19.

AFTER the echoes of the fifth trumpet had died away, there is another pause, like that which occurred after the sounding of the fourth trumpet, a pause of warning and expectation. This pause is indicated in verse 12. "One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter." This verse requires little explanation. That which had passed was indeed a woe. The smoke of the bottomless pit, which shadowed forth the Mohammedan religion, had covered a very considerable portion of the earth with its dismal pall. The scorpion-locusts, which shadowed forth the armies of the Saracens under Mohammed and his successors, had tormented men for five prophetic months, or one hundred and fifty years. But two other woes of equal, if not greater magnitude, were yet to come. To the first of these woes we now turn our attention.

I. In explaining the sixth trumpet, we will, in the first place, give A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SYMBOLS as they presented themselves to the apostle. Let us place ourselves by his side, and hear what he heard and see what he saw; for we must understand the type before we can hope to understand the thing typified. When the sixth angel sounds the trumpet which had been given him, we hear a voice from the golden altar of incense. It will be remembered that we are standing with John on the celestial plain, and that close at hand is the heavenly temple, whose courts and furniture are fashioned after the temple of the Jewish economy. The voice we hear comes from the holy place of that temple—it comes from the golden altar of incense, which is just before the vail that hides the mercy seat of God. This indicates that the voice, whatever it is, is a voice of authority. It is the voice of the great High Priest, who is at the same time the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and who has a right to command. This voice

from the invisible speaker commands the angel who had just sounded the blast upon his trumpet to let loose the four angels who were bound in the great river Euphrates. Our attention is now turned from the heavenly temple to the earthly landscape. We see on the banks of the river Euphrates, whose name is mentioned so frequently in the word of God, four angels held in check. They are angels commissioned to work the great destruction upon the earth, but their time had not yet come. They were mysteriously restrained, as if they were bound in chains; but now all things are ready, their chains are loosened, and they go forth to do the work for which they had been prepared, viz., to slay the third part of men. Their work was not speedily accomplished. The slaughter continued for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year. This slaughter is wrought, not by the angels themselves, but by the instrumentality of an immense army of horsemen. We cannot number them as they go swarming across the Euphrates and filling the world with desolation and blood, but we hear their number proclaimed. It is two hundred thousand thousand, or two hundred millions, or as it is expressed in the original, two myriads of myriads. This would indicate that the army of horsemen was so immense that it was numbered, not by tens, or hundreds, or thousands, but by tens of thousands, or myriads. When we examine more closely the innumerable horsemen, we see that they wear a peculiar uniform, unlike that of any of the warriors we have seen in the previous visions. Their armor, for the word translated "breastplates," properly means a coat of mail which covered the whole body, was variegated in color. A part was red as fire; another part was purple as jacinth; a third part was yellow as sulphur. The heads of the horses resembled rather the heads of lions, a symbol which indicates their courage and ferocity. Strange to say, out of the mouths of the horses, there seemed to issue fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these three things they wrought great destruction. By the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone which seemed to issue from their mouths, they mowed down all who dared to make a stand against them. But in addition to this power they had also power in their tails, which resembled serpents with heads; and with them they inflicted injury.

These are the symbols which presented themselves at the sounding of the sixth trumpet. They are symbols both strange and sublime. We may think that it will be impossible to find any plausible fulfillment; but let us turn over the pages of history and see. If I mistake not, we will be astonished by the accuracy with which these symbols describe in figurative language the downfall of Constantinople and the Eastern empire.

II. Let us now take up the different parts of this symbol, and see if we can discover THE EVENTS IN HISTORY they were designed to shadow forth. The sixth trumpet seems to refer to the Turkish power, from the time of



its first appearance to the final conquest of Constantinople, in the year 1453. The general reasons for this belief are these: If the fifth trumpet referred to the Saracens, the sixth would naturally refer to the Turks, for the Turkish power arose on the decline of the Saracenic, and it was the next important power in affecting the destinies of the world. Again, the great object kept in view all along in these symbols is the downfall of the Roman empire. In the first four trumpets we traced the history of the western part of the empire through its decline to its fall. In the fifth trumpet we saw the first blow struck at the eastern part of the empire by the Saracens. We would expect the sixth trumpet to continue that history. If our expectations are well founded, the sixth trumpet must refer to the Turks, by whom the Eastern empire was overthrown and its capital destroyed.

With these general remarks, let us take up the symbols as they appeared to the apostle, and see whether there is any resemblance between them and the career of the Turkish power, as it is recorded on the pages of history. In considering these symbols, I will speak of them under the following heads: the place of origin; the preparation; the duration; the army; its appearance, and its instruments of destruction. If in all these respects there is a marked resemblance between the symbols and the history, we will be justified in concluding that the sixth trumpet refers to the Turkish power.

1. *The place whence this destructive power originated is described as the banks of "the great river Euphrates."* Of the locality of this river, so celebrated in inspired and in uninspired history, nothing need be said. Every child is acquainted with it and with the names of the great cities which once stood on its banks. Did the Turks issue from this region when they went forth on their mission against the Eastern empire? The home of the Turks, or Turkomans, was originally in the neighborhood of the Caspian sea. One branch of the nation in the tenth century invaded and subdued Persia, and captured Bagdad. They embraced the Mohammedan religion, and Togrul, their first king, was made the head of the temporal power of Mohammedanism. When all this was accomplished, they crossed the Euphrates, overran Asia Minor, and continued their conquests with varying successes, until, nearly four hundred years afterwards, Constantinople became their prey. I will give but a single extract from Gibbon's history to confirm this statement. "Since the fall of the Caliphs the discord and the degeneracy of the Saracens respected the Asiatic provinces of Rome, which, by the victories of Nicephorus, Zimisces and Basil, had been extended as far as Antioch and the eastern boundaries of Armenia. Twenty-five years after the death of Basil his successors were suddenly assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians, who united the Scythian valor with the fanaticism of new proselytes, and the art and riches of a powerful monarchy. The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier

of six hundred miles, from Tauris to Erzeroum, and the blood of one hundred and thirty thousand Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet. Yet the arms of Togrul did not make any deep or lasting impression on the Greek empire. The name of Alp Arslan, the valiant lion, is expressive of the popular idea of the perfection of man; and the successors of Togrul displayed the fierceness and generosity of the royal animal. He passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry, and entered Cæsarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia, to which he had been attracted by the fame and wealth of the temple of St. Basil. The solid structure resisted the destroyer; but he carried away the doors of the shrine incrustated with gold and pearls, and profaned the relics of the tutelar saint, whose mortal frailties were now covered by the venerable rust of antiquity. The final conquest of Armenia and Georgia was achieved by Alp Arslan. In Armenia the title of a kingdom and the spirit of a nation were annihilated; the artificial fortifications were yielded by the mercenaries of Constantinople—by strangers without faith, veterans without pay or arms, and recruits without experience or discipline." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 5, p. 511.

Therefore, so far as the place of origin is concerned, the symbol is fulfilled in the Turkish power, for that power went forth conquering and to conquer from the banks of the Euphrates.

2. We were to notice *the preparation*. In verse 15, we are told, "and the four angels were loosed which were prepared." The four angels shadow forth the Turkish power. It seems that they had been bound for a time; that is, they had been held in check till they were prepared for the mission they had to accomplish. How they were held in check, we are not told; but no doubt it was as the barbarians had been held in check after the opening of the sixth seal, by the mysterious operations of divine providence. We have already seen how they were prepared, while they were thus held in check. They increased in numbers and in military skill. They embraced the Mohammedan religion, and the Turkish power was united with that of the Caliph. Thus a powerful kingdom was founded on the banks of the Euphrates, and thus abundant preparation was made for the work which was to be done. When this preparation was completed, the bonds of the angels were unloosed, the checks were removed, and the Turkish power went forth to slay the third part of men. So far, then, as the preparation is concerned, the symbol is fulfilled in the Turkish power.

3. We were to notice *the duration* of this power, as it is described in verse 16. "Which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men." It is to be observed that this verse does not describe the entire duration of the Turkish power, but only the time during which it was to slay the third part of men. This time is said to be "an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year." It is a generally acknowledged fact that in the interpretation of prophetic language, a day

represents a year, and fractional parts of a day represent proportionate parts of a year. A prophetic year, or three hundred and sixty-five prophetic days, would represent three hundred and sixty-five years. A prophetic month would represent thirty years. A prophetic day would represent one year. A prophetic hour, or one twenty-fourth part of a prophetic day, would represent fifteen days. Therefore, the time represented by the hour, and the day, and the month, and the year, would be three hundred and ninety-six years and fifteen days. Now, if our theory of interpretation is correct, this period of time should embrace the career of the Turkish power from the day it crossed the Euphrates till its mission was accomplished in the fall of Constantinople. History tells us that the Turks left Bagdad in the year 1057. For a time they were wonderfully successful. It seemed as if Constantinople would soon fall before them. But they were interrupted in their career of conquest by the crusades, that remarkable outgrowth of the superstition of the middle ages, and Constantinople did not fall into their hands till the year 1453. This would be a period of three hundred and ninety-six years, the very period represented by the hour, and the day, and the month, and the year, of the vision. And thus, so far as the duration of the destruction is concerned, the symbol is exactly fulfilled in the Turkish power.

4. We were to notice *the army* of the destroyers, as it is described in verse 16. "And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them." Two things are to be specially noticed. In the first place, the army was composed of horsemen; and in this respect it differed from the armies which overran the Western empire, and which were composed largely of infantry. In the second place, the army was so large, that it was numbered by myriads of myriads. In both these respects, history speaks in no doubtful voice. The Turkish army was for the most part composed of cavalry, and it was numbered by myriads, or tens of thousands. Let us turn to the testimony of history. "The Sultan had inquired what supply of men he could furnish for military service. 'If you send,' replied Ismael, 'one of these arrows into our camp, fifty thousand of your servants will mount on horseback.' 'And if that number,' continued Mahmud, 'should not be sufficient?' 'Send this second arrow to the horde of Balik, and you will find fifty thousand more.' 'But,' said the Gaznevide, dissembling his anxiety, 'if I should stand in need of the whole force of your kindred tribes?' 'Despatch my bow,' was the last reply of Ismael, 'and as it is circulated around, the summons will be obeyed by two hundred thousand horse.'" Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 5, p. 506. "The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Tauris to Erzeroum." p. 512. "He passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry." p. 512. "Alp Arslan flew to the scene of action at the head of forty thousand horse." p. 515. "Soliman was rather

provoked than dismayed by the loss of his capital; he admonished his subjects and allies of this strange invasion of the western barbarians; the Turkish emirs obeyed the call of loyalty and religion; the Turkoman hordes encamped round his standard; and his whole force is loosely stated by the Christians at two hundred, or even three hundred and sixty thousand horse." p. 577.

So far as the army is concerned, there is an exact resemblance between the symbol and the Turkish power.

5. We were to notice *the appearance* of the destroyers, as it is described in verse 17. "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone." As has already been said, the word translated "breastplates," does not describe one particular part of their armor, but their whole uniform. This uniform was of the color of fire, and jacinth, and brimstone; that is, it was red, and purple, and yellow. This describes the uniform of the Turkish cavalry, which was in striking contrast with the uniform of the other nations of antiquity. One says, "from their first appearance, the Ottomans have affected to wear warlike apparel of scarlet, blue, and yellow." A Christian traveler tells that "it needs only to have seen the Turkish cavalry, whether in war itself, or in war's mimicry," to understand the appropriateness of this description.

This description also tells us that the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions. It is not said that the heads of the horses were the heads of lions, but that they resembled the heads of lions. It would be easy to give them this appearance by the way in which the head-gear of the horses was arranged. And this resemblance would indicate the courage and ferocity of the destroyers, for the lion is in every language the emblem of courage and ferocity.

We are also told that out of their mouths there issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. This is the strangest symbol of all, and at first sight it may seem impossible to explain it. But let us remember John's position, and how things must have appeared to him in his vision. As he looked down from his high standpoint on the celestial plain, he saw an immense army of horsemen riding forth on their work of destruction. As they went forth, fire, and smoke, and brimstone seemed to issue from their mouths, and by these three things men were destroyed in multitudes. Certainly this describes some instrument of warfare. Was there any new instrument introduced about this time, an instrument which John had never seen, and to describe which no technical words had as yet been invented, an instrument which one ignorant of its operations, as John was, would naturally describe as sending forth fire, and smoke, and brimstone? To this question every student of history must reply in the affirmative. We have now reached that period in human history when gunpowder was

invented, artillery was introduced into warfare, and the whole science of military tactics was changed. Gibbon, in describing the capture of Constantinople, whose fall marked the termination of the hour, and the day, and the month, and the year, puts this new instrumentality in the foreground, and he conveys the impression that if it had not been for this new instrumentality, the fortifications of the capital of the Eastern empire would not have yielded to the Turks. "The chemists of China or Europe had found, by casual or elaborate experiments, that a mixture of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal, produces with a spark of fire a tremendous explosion. It was soon observed that if the expansive force were compressed in a strong tube, a ball of stone or iron might be expelled with irresistible and destructive velocity. The precise era of the invention and application of gunpowder is involved in doubtful traditions and equivocal language; yet we may clearly discern that it was known before the middle of the fourteenth century; and that before the end of the same, the use of artillery in battles and sieges by sea and land, was familiar to the states of Germany, Italy, Spain, France and England. The priority of nations is of small account; none could derive any exclusive benefit from their previous or superior knowledge; and in the common improvement, they stood on the same level of relative power and military science. Nor was it possible to circumscribe the secret within the pale of the church; it was disclosed to the Turks by the treachery of apostates and the selfish policy of rivals: and the Sultans had sense to adopt, and wealth to reward, the talents of a Christian engineer. The Genoese, who transported Amurath into Europe, must be accused as his preceptors; and it was probably by their hands that his cannon was cast and directed at the siege of Constantinople." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 6, p. 288. "Among the instruments of destruction, he studied with peculiar care the recent and tremendous discovery of the Latins; and his artillery surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world. A founder of cannon, a Dane or Hungarian, who had been almost starved in the Greek service, deserted to the Moslems and was liberally entertained by the Turkish sultan. Mohammed was satisfied with the answer to his first question, which he eagerly pressed on the artist: 'Am I able to cast a cannon capable of throwing a ball or stone of sufficient size to batter the walls of Constantinople? I am not ignorant of their strength; but were they more solid than those of Babylon, I could oppose an engine of superior power; the position and management of that engine must be left to your engineers.' On this assurance, a foundry was established at Adrianople; the metal was prepared; and at the end of three months, Urban produced a piece of brass ordnance of stupendous and almost incredible magnitude; a measure of twelve palms is assigned to the bore; and the stone bullet weighed above six hundred pounds. A vacant place before the new palace was chosen for the first experiment; but to prevent the sud-

den and mischievous effects of astonishment and fear, a proclamation was issued that the cannon would be discharged the ensuing day. The explosion was felt or heard in a circuit of a hundred furlongs; the ball, by the force of gunpowder, was driven above a mile, and on the spot where it fell, it buried itself a fathom deep in the ground. For the conveyance of this destructive engine, a frame or carriage of thirty-wagons was linked together and drawn along by a team of sixty oxen; two hundred men on both sides were stationed to poise and support the rolling weight; two hundred and fifty workmen marched before, to smooth the way and repair the bridges; and near two months were employed in a laborious journey of one hundred and fifty miles." p. 379. "The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound and the fire of their musketry and cannon. Their small arms discharged at the same time either five, or even ten balls of lead of the size of a walnut; and, according to the closeness of the ranks and the force of the powder, several breastplates and bodies were transpierced by the same shot. \* \* \* The great cannon of Mohammed has been separately noticed; an important and visible object in the history of the times; but that enormous engine was flanked by two fellows almost of equal magnitude; the long order of Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places; and of one of these, it is ambiguously expressed, that it was mounted with one hundred and thirty guns, or that it discharged one hundred and thirty bullets. \* \* \* A circumstance that distinguishes the siege of Constantinople is the reunion of the ancient and modern artillery. The cannon were intermingled with the mechanical engines for casting stones and darts; the bullet and the battering ram were directed against the same walls; nor had the discovery of gunpowder superseded the use of the liquid and unextinguishable fire." p. 388.

These extracts show that this novel instrument of war played a prominent part during the latter part of the Turkish invasion; and not only then, but ever afterwards, it revolutionized the whole system of warfare. And surely it was fitting that its introduction should have mention in these visions of the future. And how could one who was a stranger to artillery practice, describe it in better language than John has done? Surely we, who have read so much of the fire, and smoke, and sulphurous smell of the battle field, must appreciate the description: "out of their mouths there issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone." So far as these things are concerned, there is a resemblance between the symbols and the Turkish power.

6. We were to notice *the instruments of destruction*, as they are described in verses 18, 19. "By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt."

With regard to the instrumentality mentioned in verse 18, nothing more need be said. It has just been shown that the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone shadow forth the artillery, which was so extensively used by the Turks in the siege of Constantinople. It need only be added that the destruction of human life was great. The Eastern empire was destroyed. Great multitudes, whose numbers will never be known till the last day, and who are here said to be "the third part of men," were slain with the sword.

But we are also told that they had power in their tails, and with them they did hurt. The word translated "do hurt," means to oppress, or to do injury. There is a marked contrast between the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone which issued from the mouths of the horses, and the power which was in their tails. With the former they killed men; with the latter they oppressed men. This symbol of the serpent-like tails is a strange one, and yet it seems to be a symbol of rulers. But how so? A crown is the natural symbol of a king; a sword, of a general; a balance, of a judge. But how can a horse's tail denote a ruler? It is a strange association, and an unlikely symbol. And yet among the Turks alone, of all the nations of the world, a horse's tail was the symbol of authority. In their early career the standard of the army was once lost in battle, and the Turkish commander cut off his horse's tail, made it the rallying ensign, and so won the victory. From that time, it was adopted as the standard of the Turks, and it was used by the rulers to mark their rank and to give them their names. Thus, a pasha of highest rank is called a pasha of three tails; the next lowest, of two tails; the next, of one tail; and each one has an ensign corresponding to his title. What a wonderful coincidence! Who could have predicted it but he to whom the future is as clear as the present? And these Turkish rulers, whose symbols of authority were horses' tails, were guilty of great injustice. This is evident from the slightest acquaintance with the history of the Ottoman empire. So far, then, as these things are concerned, there is a wonderful resemblance between the symbols which John saw, and the Turkish power.

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## LECTURE XXVI.

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### THE EFFECT OF THE DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.—REV. 9: 20, 21.

THE divine judgments shadowed forth by the symbols we have been considering, and recorded on the pages of history, are indeed terrible. They are well calculated to make men understand the justice and power of God, the evil and punishment of sin, and the need of repentance and holiness. But these judgments were without effect. In spite of the trumpets and the woes which the trumpets called forth, men continued in sin and hardened their hearts more and more. But this need occasion no surprise. From the time of Pharaoh down through all the centuries, the adverse providences of God have proved a savor of death unto death unto many.

Let us recall for a moment the judgments which had visited the church and the world. When Constantine became a Christian, and the Christian religion became the established religion of the empire, it seemed as if the triumph of Christianity was complete. But the church was better able to resist adversity than prosperity, and the enemies within were more to be dreaded than the enemies without. A few years of prosperity and power corrupted its purity and dimmed its faith; and the King and Head of the church visited its iniquities with rods and its sins with chastisements. We have seen how the empire was divided; we have seen how one barbarian horde after another invaded the western part of the empire, until at last Rome itself was taken, and the glory of the kingdom departed; we have seen what a severe blow was inflicted upon the Eastern empire by the Saracens. We saw in our last lecture how that empire was overthrown by the Turks during the three hundred and ninety-six years represented by the prophetic hour, and day, and month, and year, a period which was terminated by the fall of Constantinople in the year 1453. While the verses which contain the subject of the present lecture point back to all the woes which had befallen the church and the world under the previous trumpets, they have special reference to the visitation described under the sixth trumpet. During the fulfillment of the symbols of that trumpet great calamities had overtaken the church; and these calamities pointed clearly at the sins of which the church had been guilty, and they should have convinced the church of sin and led it to repentance. But they did not. Though a third part of the human race were killed, yet "the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

I must here remind you again that the woe which the Turks were instrumental in inflicting, fell upon the eastern part of what was once the great Roman empire. It touched only the edges of the continents of Europe and Africa. The third part of men, who were slain, were for the most part of the continent of Asia. We would therefore naturally turn to the



western part of the empire to find "the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues." The inhabitants of Europe and Northern Africa, who were nominal Christians, were spectators of what had been done in the East. If they had made a right improvement of the terrible things which they saw, they would have forsaken their errors and returned to the living God. Instead of this, they continued in the practice of the sins which are here enumerated. Let us take up the history of those times and see whether these prophetic words have any foundation in fact.

The time to which the subject of my lecture has reference is the close of the fifteenth century. If we were correct in our explanation of the prophetic hour, and day, and month, and year, the termination of that period is marked by the fall of Constantinople, which occurred in the year 1453. As the words we are now considering follow hard after the termination of that prophetic period, we must refer them to the latter half of the fifteenth century. And these words teach us two things. In the first place, they teach us that the men here referred to, that is, the members of the western church, had been guilty of certain heinous sins before this date. In the second place, they teach us that these men, in spite of the divine judgments, continued in the practice of these sins after this date. Are these teachings sustained by the facts of history? This is the simple question we are to discuss in the present lecture. It is stated that the men who were not killed by these plagues "repented not of the works of their hands." These works are then enumerated under five particulars.

1. The first sin mentioned in this dark catalogue is *the worship of devils*. They repented not "that they should not worship devils." There are two principal words in the New Testament which are translated "devils" in our version. The one refers almost always to Satan, the great evil spirit; the other refers to imaginary heathen gods, and to such evil spirits or demons as our Lord cast out so frequently during his earthly ministry. The latter word is the one here used. It was a common opinion that these demons were the spirits of wicked men; hence the word is often applied to departed spirits. Bearing in mind what is meant by the word, we will have no difficulty in determining what is meant by the worship of devils. It does not mean that the men here referred to worshiped Satan, but that they worshiped beings that are inferior to the supreme God, whether they were created spirits of a rank superior to men, or spirits of departed men. These last were frequently worshiped by the heathen. Whenever a man had benefited the race by his deeds of heroism, or by increasing its knowledge or happiness, he was, after his death, enrolled among the gods. Therefore, the most of the gods whom the heathen adored were heroes or benefactors.

It is a well known fact, that the corrupt church of the middle ages worshiped saints. Centuries before the time to which we are now referring, the latter half of the fifteenth century, canonized saints were worshiped in

Christian Rome, just as deified heroes had been worshiped in pagan Rome. When a man had been distinguished for his holiness, or his austerity, or his strict adherence to the laws of the church, he was, after his death, enrolled among the saints. Prayers were offered to him, and his aid was invoked on behalf of the worshippers. Nor did the divine judgments which we are now considering, work any change in this regard. Men did not repent of this saint worship. They continued to canonize saints and to honor them with divine honor. The number of those who have been canonized cannot be computed, and still the work goes on. Every year some new saint is added to the calendar, and claims the adoration of the faithful. To-day, a large part of the prayers of those who are in the Papal communion is addressed to the Virgin Mary and to other saints. While prayers to our heavenly Father and to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are rarely heard, prayers to canonized men and women are without number. Such prayers are blasphemies and an insult to God, who is the only proper object of worship. All this requires no proof. It is well known to every one who has the slightest acquaintance with history, that such worship was paid before the judgments here referred to, and that it has been paid ever since. Therefore these prophetic words have received their fulfillment; the rest of the men who were not killed by the plagues repented not of "the worship of departed spirits."

2. A second sin mentioned in this dark catalogue is the sin of *idolatry*. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues repented not \* \* \* that they should not worship \* \* \* idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk." Idols or images were worshiped by the heathen. In every temple, there was some visible object of worship, before which crowds of worshippers were ever bowing the knee and offering prayers. But it seems strange that such worship should be introduced into a church acquainted with the true God. Yet this was a sin into which the Jews often fell. Nor was the Christian church guiltless, though it, as well as the Jewish church, regarded the moral law as the rule of life; that moral law, whose second precept plainly forbids the worship of images. In spite of this plain precept, and in spite of the irony with which the word of God and the more enlightened followers of the true God spake of the idols, which having eyes could not see, and having ears could not hear, men made images of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, and worshiped them as gods.

The rise and progress of idol worship in the Western church is discussed at large in Gibbon's history, and I cannot do better than quote a few extracts from his graphic description. "The primitive Christians were possessed with an unconquerable repugnance to the use and abuse of images; and this aversion may be ascribed to their descent from the Jews and their enmity to the Greeks. The Mosaic law had severely proscribed all representations

of the Deity ; and that precept was firmly established in the principles and practice of the chosen people. The wit of the Christian apologists was pointed against the foolish idolaters, who bowed before the workmanship of their own hands ; the images of brass and marble, which, had they been endowed with sense and motion, should have started rather from the pedestal to adore the creative powers of the artist. \* \* \* Under the successors of Constantine, in the peace and luxury of the triumphant church, the more prudent bishops condescended to indulge visible superstition, for the benefit of the multitude, and, after the ruin of paganism, they were no longer restrained by the apprehension of an odious parallel. The first introduction of a symbolic worship was in the veneration of the cross and of relics. The saints and martyrs, whose intercession was implored, were seated on the right hand of God ; but the gracious and often supernatural favors, which in the popular belief were showered round their tomb, conveyed an unquestionable sanction of the devout pilgrims, who visited and touched and kissed these lifeless remains, the memorials of their merits and sufferings. But a memorial, more interesting than the skull or the sandals of a departed worthy, is the faithful copy of his person and features, delineated by the arts of painting or sculpture. In every age such copies, so congenial to human feelings, have been cherished by the zeal of private friendship or public esteem ; the images of the Roman emperors were adored with civil, and almost religious honors ; a reverence less ostentatious but more sincere was applied to the statues of sages and patriots ; and these profane virtues, these splendid sins, disappeared in the presence of the holy men, who had died for the celestial and everlasting country. At first, the experiment was made with caution and scruple ; and the venerable pictures were allowed to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the cold and to gratify the prejudices of the heathen proselytes. By a slow and inevitable progression, the honors of the original were transferred to the copy ; the devout Christian prayed before the image of a saint ; and the pagan rites of genuflexion, luminaries, and incense, again stole into the Catholic church. The scruples of reason or piety were silenced by the strong evidence of visions and miracles ; and the pictures which speak and move, and bleed, must be endowed with a divine energy, and may be considered as the proper objects of religious adoration. \* \* \* The use, and even the worship of images, was firmly established before the end of the sixth century ; they were fondly cherished by the warm imagination of the Greeks and Asiatics ; the Pantheon and Vatican were adorned with emblems of a new superstition." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 5, p. 2.

In the beginning of the eighth century, there arose a strong party in opposition to image worship, a sect which is known in history as "the Iconoclasts." For a time they were successful in their opposition, and the idolatry of the church was held in check. But about the middle of the

ninth century, images were restored by the decree of the Council of Nice, and from that time idolatry made rapid progress. "While the popes established in Italy their freedom and dominion, the images, the first cause of their revolt, were restored in the Eastern empire. Under the reign of Constantine the Fifth, the union of civil and ecclesiastical power had overthrown the tree, without extirpating the root, of superstition. The idols, for such they were now held, were secretly cherished by the order and the sex most prone to devotion; and the fond alliance of the monks and the females obtained a final victory over the reason and authority of man. \* \* \* Three hundred and fifty bishops, in council, unanimously pronounced that the worship of images is agreeable to Scripture and reason, to the fathers and councils of the church." p. 36.

Nor did the divine judgments we have been considering work any change in this regard. Men did not repent of their idolatry. After the fifteenth century, as before it, Christian churches were disgraced with idols and with idol worshippers. Does this require any proof? Where is the Roman Catholic church to-day in which pictures and images of the saints are not adored? Such worship has always been a peculiar mark of that church. Its cathedrals are everywhere known by their crosses, and crucifixes, and pictures, and images, and by the multitudes that are ever giving to these things, made with hands, the worship which is due to God alone. Therefore these prophetic words have received their fulfillment in history: "the rest of the men who were not killed by the plagues, yet repented not that they should not worship idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk."

3. A third sin mentioned in this dark catalogue is the sin of *murder*. "Neither repented they of their murders." It can easily be shown that this crime prevailed extensively before the Turkish invasion, and that that invasion had no tendency in checking it, for murder was as common after the fifteenth century as before it. Indeed, nothing has characterized the Roman power more than the murders it has committed in persecuting so-called heretics. Every ecclesiastical history is filled with accounts of murders and martyrdoms. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, anathema after anathema was pronounced upon the Waldenses and other Christians, who held to the simplicity of the true faith. One crusade after another was proclaimed against them, and full absolution from the day of their birth to the day of their death was promised to all who should perish in the holy war. It is estimated that in this crusade against the Waldenses alone, a million of men perished. And when to this number we add the multitudes who perished in other persecutions, we must be astonished at the murders which in those ages were committed in the name of religion.

Nor did the divine judgments we have been considering work any change in this regard. Persecutions continued with unabated violence; they

rather increased in violence. The Inquisition, with its terrible instruments of torture, was established; and by the Inquisition, one hundred and fifty thousand persons perished in thirty years. From the beginning of the order of the Jesuits, in the year 1540, to the year 1580, it is supposed that nine hundred thousand were put to death in various persecutions. But we need not dwell on the efforts which were made to suppress the true religion. We need not attempt to picture the scenes of bloodshed which were witnessed in Switzerland, France, England and Scotland. We have read enough of them to make us ashamed of our humanity, and to fill us with wonder at the excesses which men can commit in the name of the holy child Jesus. The number of the slain can never be known till the last day shall reveal the secrets of the grave. But historians, gathering up as well as they can the facts, have tried to form some estimate of the great army of the martyrs, and they tell us that not less than sixty-eight million human beings have been put to death by this one persecuting power of the Roman Catholic church. If this estimate, or if anything like it, is correct, these prophetic words have received their fulfillment in history: "neither repented they of their murders."

4. A fourth sin mentioned in this dark catalogue is *sorcery*. "Neither repented they of their sorceries." According to the uniform use of the word "sorcery" in the New Testament, anything is said to be done by sorcery which is accomplished by magical arts, by cunning, by sleight of hand, or by deceiving the senses in any way. Therefore, according to this uniform usage, all pretended miracles would be described by the term. That pretended miracles were common before the Turkish invasion, no one will deny; and that they continued after the Turkish invasion, is equally beyond dispute. These pretended miracles have always been one of the principal means employed for the advancement of the Papal religion. We need only refer to the supposed efficacy of the relics of the saints, to the bleeding pictures, and to the numberless frauds which have been practiced in all ages by the Roman priesthood. The days of pretended miracles are not over yet. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, with all its boasted refinement and civilization, miracles are said to be wrought in various places in the south of France, and multitudes of pilgrims annually flock to the favored spots in which the Virgin Mary and other saints are said to manifest their power. And this delusion is fostered by the Roman Catholic church. Therefore, these prophetic words have received their fulfillment in history: "neither repented they of their sorceries."

5. A fifth sin mentioned in this dark catalogue is *fornication*. "Neither repented they of their fornication." It is unnecessary, and it would be improper to enter into any details on this point. Every one who is acquainted with the history of the middle ages, both before and after the Turkish invasion, must be aware of the licentiousness which prevailed,

especially among the clergy. The pilgrimages of the times, the system of indulgences, the celibacy of the clergy and auricular confession, all threw temptation in the way and helped on the sin of the church. Some of the highest officials, even some of the popes, were men of notoriously impure lives. Proof of this can be had for the asking. I refer to the history and poetry of the times. I refer to the decrees of the highest ecclesiastical courts; for, as one historian remarks, "if you wish to see the errors of those ages, read the Acts of the Councils." If these things are so, and no intelligent man can doubt them, even though he is a believer in the Roman Catholic church, which in these later years has put on a different face, then these prophetic words have received their fulfillment: "neither repented they of their fornication."

6. The sixth sin mentioned in this dark catalogue is *theft*. "Neither repented they of their thefts." Theft may be defined, and the word is often used in this sense in our common speech, as the taking of money or property without giving any proper equivalent. And without controversy, in the ages we are considering, money was extorted from the people under various false pretenses and without giving any equivalent. Relics were carried about the country and exposed to view at fixed prices, or sold for fabulous sums. Pretended miracles robbed many a man of his property. The sale of indulgences was a source of vast revenue. Pilgrimages to holy places made the holy shrines rich with the offerings of the pilgrims. Masses for the dead, which survivors willingly paid for in order to release the souls of their friends from purgatory, have in all ages replenished and are yet replenishing the coffers of the church. As a single illustration, take Gibbon's account of the jubilee or holy year, which the popes instituted in order to fill their coffers. "The prejudice was encouraged in some degree by the resort of pilgrims to the shrines of the apostles; and the last legacy of the popes, the institution of the holy year, was not less beneficial to the people than to the clergy. Since the loss of Palestine, the gift of plenary indulgences, which had been applied to the crusades, remained without an object; and the most valuable treasure of the church was sequestered above eight years from public circulation. A new channel was opened by the diligence of Boniface the Eighth, who reconciled the vices of ambition and avarice; and the pope had sufficient learning to recollect and revive the secular games which were celebrated in Rome at the conclusion of every century. \* \* \* On the first of January of the year 1300, the church of St. Peter was crowded with the faithful, who demanded the customary indulgence of the holy time. The pontiff, who watched and irritated their impatience, was soon persuaded by ancient testimony of the justice of their claim; and he proclaimed a plenary absolution to all Catholics who, in the course of that year, and at every similar period, should respectfully visit the apostolic churches of St. Peter and

St. Paul. The welcome sound was propagated through Christendom ; and at first from the nearest provinces of Italy, and at length from the remote kingdoms of Hungary and Britain, the highways were thronged with a swarm of pilgrims who sought to expiate their sins in a journey, however costly or laborious, which was exempt from the perils of military service. All exceptions of rank or sex, of age or infirmity, were forgotten in the common transport ; and in the streets and churches many persons were trampled to death by the eagerness of devotion. The calculation of their numbers could not be easy nor accurate ; and they have probably been magnified by a dexterous clergy, well apprised of the contagion of example ; yet we are assured by a judicious historian, who assisted at the ceremony, that Rome was never replenished with less than two hundred thousand strangers ; and another spectator has fixed at two millions the total concourse of the year. A trifling oblation from each individual would accumulate a royal treasure ; and two priests stood night and day, with rakes in their hands, to collect, without counting, the heaps of gold and silver that were poured on the altar of St. Paul. \* \* \* To the impatience of the popes, we may ascribe the successive reduction to fifty, thirty-three and twenty-five years ; although the second of these terms is commensurate with the life of Christ. The profusion of indulgences, the revolt of the Protestants, and the decline of superstition have much diminished the value of the jubilee. Yet even the nineteenth and last festival was a year of pleasure and profit to the Romans ; and a philosophic smile will not disturb the triumph of the priest or the happiness of the people." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 6, p. 456.

Thus it has been shown that all the sins which are here enumerated were committed before the Turkish invasion, that the Turkish invasion did not lead men to repentance, and that these sins were as common after the fifteenth century as they were before, and even more common. Therefore, these words of the Holy Spirit are literally true of the very time here referred to: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood : which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk ; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

## LECTURE XXVII.

## THE MIGHTY ANGEL OF THE SEA AND LAND.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.—REV. 10: 1-4.

AT the close of our last lecture we left the church and the world in a deplorable condition. The sins of superstition, idolatry, murder, sorcery, fornication and theft prevailed and increased from year to year. It seemed as if nothing could check them. Judgment after judgment, woe after woe had been sent, but men repented not. Those times are rightly called the dark ages. But the mercy of God was not yet exhausted. Though terrible judgments had failed to bring men to repentance, he would try another plan—he would interpose in another way. He would reveal to men once more, in all its purity, the gospel of his Son. He would make them acquainted with his word, and perhaps that precious word would accomplish more than bloodshed and famine. To this manifestation of the divine mercy your attention is invited in the present lecture. Compared with the startling events of war and invasion which we have been considering, this manifestation of the divine mercy seems like the calm after the storm.

The chapter before us is supposed to refer to the Reformation. The general reasons for this belief are these: If we have been correct in our expositions of the previous visions, we have been brought down to the close of the fifteenth century, when the day of the Reformation was beginning to dawn. Again, the next important event which occurred in the history of the world after the Turkish invasion, was the Reformation of the sixteenth century. If the vision of the previous chapter referred to that invasion, which was terminated by the fall of Constantinople, then we would expect the vision of this chapter to refer to the Reformation. Again, the symbols of this chapter find a marked and satisfying fulfillment in the principal events of the Reformation. To show this will be the great object of the present lecture.

Let us get a clear conception of this vision as it presented itself to the apostle. An angel, strong and mighty, descended from heaven to earth, not on an errand of wrath, but of mercy. His robe was a cloud; his crown was a rainbow; his face shone as the sun; his feet were as pillars of fire.



In his hands he carried a little book, which was open. He uttered a great cry, which was answered by seven thunders. When John was about to write what the seven thunders uttered, he was commanded to write it not. Then the mighty angel, with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, swore a solemn oath that the expected time should not be till the seventh trumpet should sound. These are the symbols of the vision, and the duty before us is to explain them and to see whether they have received their fulfillment in the Reformation.

I. THE ANGEL of the vision is the angel of the Reformation. In other words, the angel is a symbol of the Reformation. The condition of the church was such that no help could be expected from human sources. Help must come from heaven. Therefore, the angel is represented as descending from heaven. Every one who is acquainted with the history of the Reformation must know that this part of the symbol has been fulfilled. The Reformation was of heavenly origin. It is true, men were employed as instrumentalities, but they were prepared for their work in a strange way. That any in that dark age were brought to see the truth; that any in that impure age were brought to follow after holiness; that any in that ignorant age were brought to know and appreciate the word of God, is a wonder. It can be accounted for only on the supposition that God directly exerted the power of his grace, which is still described, in figurative language, as an angel descending from heaven.

This angel of the Reformation not only descended from heaven—he was also “mighty.” Nothing but a mighty power could accomplish the work which was to be done. Darkness, error and corruption were to be removed, and the church was to be lifted to a higher plane of faith and practice. All this was to be accomplished by the Reformation. It found the world in a condition which can hardly be described—hardly be believed. It gave the world a knowledge, a purity and a life, which all the subsequent assaults of Satan have not been able to destroy. That which has done this must be a mighty power, which is well described in figurative language as a “mighty angel come down from heaven.”

II. Therefore, if the angel of the vision had been described only as a mighty angel coming down from heaven, we would be justified in considering him as a symbol of the Reformation. But this is not all. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL, as it is described in the first verse of this chapter, finds its fulfillment in history, and thus confirms the conclusion that the angel of the vision is a symbol of the Reformation. It is said that the angel was “clothed with a cloud.” A cloud is a symbol of glory and majesty. It is so used in many passages of the Old Testament, to which I need not refer. The Saviour ascended in a cloud, and in a similar manner he will

come again to judge the world at the last day. And the fact that this angel was clothed with a cloud indicates his divine glory and majesty. These are the characteristics of the Reformation. It was glorious beyond earthly comparison, and beyond any parallel in the history of the race, save only the establishment of Christianity in the apostolic age. It was majestic in its inception, in its progress, in its triumphs, in the work it had to do, and in the way in which it performed its work. Therefore, the Reformation is well described in figurative language as an angel "clothed with a cloud" of glory and majesty.

It is also said that this angel had "a rainbow upon his head." The rainbow carries us back to Ararat, where it was the seal of the covenant with Noah. Without doubt, the rainbow is an emblem of peace. As in the natural world, it is a sign that the storm has passed, and that the sun is again shining; so in the symbolical world, it is a symbol that the tempest of divine wrath is over, and that blessed peace has come again. And the fact that this angel was crowned with a rainbow would indicate that he came not on a message of wrath, but of peace. This was a characteristic of the Reformation. It came with a message like that of the angels who announced the birth of the Saviour: "on earth peace, good will toward men." It came to preach the gospel of peace, to proclaim peace among nations and among neighbors, and to reconcile between sinners and an offended God. Therefore, the Reformation is well described in figurative language as an angel crowned "with a rainbow."

It is also said that the angel's "face was as it were the sun"; that is, as bright as the sun. The meaning of this symbol is easily understood. The angel came to give light and knowledge. This was a characteristic of the Reformation; it was the great characteristic of the Reformation. Darkness had covered the earth, a gross darkness the people. During all subsequent times, those ages have been spoken of as the dark ages. It was the policy of the rulers in the church and the state to keep the people in darkness. But the Reformation came, bringing light and knowledge. In spite of the tyranny of kings and the persecution of priests, it illumined the world with the light from the sun of righteousness. Men, whose power was founded on the ignorance and superstition of the masses, opposed it with all their might, but they could not keep back the dawn of the better day. Therefore, the Reformation is well described in figurative language as an angel whose "face was as it were the sun."

It is also said that the angel's "feet were as pillars of fire." This is no new symbol in these visions. The feet of the great High Priest of our profession who, in the introductory vision, was standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks, are said to be like "fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." The meaning of the symbol here is the same that it was there. Nothing could withstand the progress of this angel. He went

forth like columns of flame. Everything that was impure and unstable was consumed before him, and nothing but that which could abide the test was left behind him. And this was a characteristic of the Reformation. It made rapid headway against the greatest opposition. The civil power, and the still greater power of the church, tried to resist it in vain. It went forth like a consuming, purifying fire. Therefore, the Reformation is well described in figurative language as an angel whose "feet were as pillars of fire."

While it may be true, that in any one of these particulars the resemblance between the symbolic angel and the Reformation is not sufficient to determine that this is the correct interpretation, yet the striking resemblance in all these particulars must confirm the theory that the angel of the vision is the symbol of the Reformation.

III. THE OPEN BOOK which the angel carried in his hand still further confirms the conclusion that the angel of the vision is the symbol of the Reformation. "And he had in his hand a little book open." The apostle takes special pains to show us that the book here mentioned was not the book sealed with seven seals, which at the beginning of this vision had been given into the hands of the Lamb. That was a large book; this was a little book. That was sealed; this was open. Therefore, if that book contained the history of the church and the world subsequent to the time of John, the contents of this book must be very different.

A book, especially an open book, is an unmistakable symbol of knowledge. The giving of such a book is the emblem of the revelation of knowledge. The work of the missionary is often represented in symbolic pictures by a man offering to the heathen an open Bible. This seems to be the meaning of that part of the present vision, in which the angel is described as coming to earth with an open volume. It was not a bow that he carried, which is the symbol of conquest; it was not a sword, which is the symbol of slaughter; it was not a pair of balances, which is a symbol of scarcity; it was a book, which is the symbol of knowledge; it was an open book, which is the symbol that knowledge was about to be revealed.

This symbol, then, requires for its fulfillment some such facts as these: Previous to this time there must have been a great lack of knowledge among men. At this time, astonishing advances must have been made in knowledge. These advances must have been accomplished through some unexpected means, as if an angel had come down from heaven. The great instrumentality must have been some little book, whose contents were before unknown, but which were now revealed to all. Are there such facts in the history of the world at the time of the Reformation? On this point there can be no doubt, for history speaks with unusual plainness. Before the Reformation, as has been said again and again during the course of this lecture, there

was general ignorance, but by the Reformation a great impetus was given to learning. The great instrumentality by which this was reached was a book, even *the* book, the word of God. For many centuries before this time, the Bible was almost unknown. One reason for this was the cost of books. Before the art of printing was invented, manuscripts were prepared only with great labor, and they were to be found only in the hands of the richest individuals and societies. A short time before the Reformation, the art of printing had been invented, but still books were scarce; and because books were scarce, education was at a low ebb. Hardly any of the common people could read; and even the clergy, who constituted the learned class in those days, could hardly be said to be educated. One historian tells us that in Spain not one priest in a thousand could write a letter of common salutation. Because men could not read, the book was found in but few homes. But there was another reason, more powerful than the cost of books and the ignorance of the people, why the Scriptures were kept from the knowledge of men. It was the policy of the church to keep men in ignorance of the revelation which God had made for the salvation of sinners, for in no other way could the church preserve its unlimited power, which was founded on the superstition of the masses. Therefore, the church exerted all its influence to prevent the free circulation of the Scriptures. But the time had now come when the book was to be known. Translations were made into various languages; the art of printing was improved; books were multiplied; and before many years passed away, every one who desired it could possess a Bible.

To show the influence of the Bible, we have only to refer to the life of Luther, who more than any other man was the embodiment of the Reformation. He was the son of a poor German miner, born and nurtured in poverty. In his early school days he sang from house to house for his daily bread. At last a Madame Cotta, hearing him sing at her door, became interested in him, and gave him a home in her house. From that time he experienced brighter days. He entered the university of Erfurt in the year 1501, and pursued his studies with great success. During all these years he was an earnest and bigoted disciple of the church of Rome. He took holy orders, and became one of the austere of the monks. But one day, while examining the library of the university, he lighted upon a Latin Bible. It was held by strong and rusted clasps of brass, and on it lay the dust of fifty years or more. It was the first time he had ever seen a Bible. He opened and read. New light entered his soul, and though the darkness of superstition was not entirely dispelled for several years afterwards, it was to him the dawn of day. Having discovered the treasure of the Divine Word, he determined that others should be made acquainted with its blessings. When he became established in the faith, at the first opportunity which his manifold labors afforded him, he began

a translation of the Scriptures into the German language, and he was impatient of every interruption till this work was accomplished. When the task was finished, the press multiplied copies of the Bible, until it was an open book through all his native land. And so it was in other countries, until the Bible became an open book in all lands. The Bible was the first book printed; and it has been more frequently printed than any other.

If these things are so, the fitness of the symbol is manifest. The Reformation could not be more appropriately described in figurative language than as a mighty angel coming down from heaven with a little book open in his hands.

IV. THE POSITION of the angel still further confirms the conclusion that the angel of the vision is the symbol of the Reformation. "He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth." The great work of the Reformation was not to be confined to any particular locality; it was designed to bless the world. Continents, and islands, and those who go down to the sea in ships were to feel its blessed influence. That this was the design of Providence is abundantly evident from subsequent history. The Reformation began in Germany; it spread like leaven through Europe; it crossed the channel to those lands from which our ancestors came, and which have ever since been the stronghold of Protestantism. The ocean was no barrier to its onward progress. Still the good work goes on, and it will go on till the Word of God is known and loved over all lands and over all seas. If these things are so, the fitness of this part of the symbol is manifest. The Reformation could not be more fitly described in figurative language than as a mighty angel, who came down from heaven with an open book in his hands, and planted his feet, one on the land and the other on the sea, to show that he was to exercise dominion over all the world.

V. THE CRY of the angel, AND THE SEVEN THUNDERS which answered that cry, still further confirm the conclusion that the angel of the vision is a symbol of the Reformation. "And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." The cry of the angel is here compared to the roar of a lion. When the monarch of the forest roars, his voice is heard far and near, and it arrests the attention of all who hear. This seems to be the exact point in the comparison. The cry of the angel was a loud cry, and one which arrested attention and inspired awe. What he said, John did not attempt to record; but if this angel, as seems evident from the points which have

been established, is the angel of the Reformation, we cannot be at a loss to know the substance of what he said. We have already seen how Luther, the great apostle of the Reformation, was first enlightened by the accidental finding of a copy of the Scriptures in the library of the university of Erfurt. I wish we could trace the history of his enlightenment from that hour to the time of his complete deliverance, but the space at command forbids. It will be sufficient to say, that when the monk Tetzel, who had been sent out by the pope to raise money by the sale of indulgences, came to Luther's city of Wittenberg and drove his infamous trade there, and when some of Luther's own flock bought indulgences, and in the confessional of his church plead that their sins had been pardoned, his courageous soul was aroused, and he nailed to the door of the church the ninety-five theses which startled the world. In these theses, no truth stood out more prominently than this: "men are justified by faith alone"; a truth which shook the foundations of the Papal church, and which became the battle cry of the Reformation and the reformers. As the Reformation spread, men took it up everywhere, until the words "justified by faith alone," were as familiar through all Christendom as they had been in Wittenberg. This I believe to be the cry which the angel uttered, which embodies the teaching of the reformers and the spirit of the Reformation, and which is yet heard in every Protestant church the world over: "men are justified by faith alone."

This cry was answered by the voices of seven thunders. The seven thunders at once remind us of that other vision of the Apocalypse, in which the church of Rome is represented as sitting upon the seven hills; and we are led to interpret the seven thunders as the anathemas which the popes of Rome thundered forth against the reformers. These anathemas are often spoken of in history as the thunders of the Vatican. It was by these thunders, these decrees of excommunication, that the pope endeavored to counteract and destroy the influence of the reformers. The influence which these anathemas had on the reformers is described by the effect which the thunders of the vision had on the apostle. He thought, at first, that the words which the seven thunders uttered were the voice of God, and he was about to write them; but a voice from heaven told him to write them not. It was as if that voice had said, Pay no attention to the thunders; they are not divine; they can do no harm; do not put them on record, for they are not to be obeyed.

This was the way in which Luther and his fellows regarded the anathemas of the church. At first, they trembled through fear, and were ready to recognize in them the voice of God. Listen to his own account of his feelings at this time. "When I began the affair of the indulgences I was a monk and a most mad papist. So intoxicated was I and drenched in papal dogmas, that I would have been ready to murder and to assist others in

murdering any person who would have uttered a syllable against the duty of obedience to the pope. \* \* \* \* Certainly at that time I adored him in earnest. \* \* \* \* How distressed my heart was at that time, 1517, how submissive to the hierarchy, not feignedly but really, those little know, who at this day insult the majesty of the pope with much pride and arrogance. I was ignorant of many things which now, by the grace of God, I understand. I disputed; I was open to conviction. Not finding satisfaction in the works of theologians and canonists, I wished to consult the living members of the church itself. There were some godly souls that entirely approved my propositions. But I did not consider their authority as of weight with me in spiritual concerns. The popes, cardinals, bishops, monks, priests, were the objects of my confidence. It was from them that I looked for the voice of the Spirit. After being enabled to answer every objection which was brought against me from the Scriptures, one difficulty remained, and only one; that the pope ought to be obeyed. \* \* \* \* If I had then dared to do as I now do, I would have expected every hour that the earth would have opened to swallow me up alive, like Korah and Abiram." Elliot, vol. 2. pp. 118, 119.

But he was soon led to see that the pope was Antichrist. He braved the papal bull and called it "the infernal voice of Antichrist." And thus, though at first he was inclined to regard the thunders of the Vatican as the decrees of God and worthy to be remembered and obeyed, yet he soon heard the voice of the Holy Spirit saying, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." As if it had been said: Be not afraid of them, for they are of no divine authority; they deserve no place among the commandments of God. In these things there is a resemblance between the symbol and the things symbolized.

The rest of this vision must be reserved for another lecture. But have we not sufficiently established the fact that the angel of the vision is the angel of the Reformation? It must astonish every thoughtful heart to find every part of the symbol receive its fulfillment in history. If I was moved to represent in an allegorical painting the Reformation of the sixteenth century, I can imagine no symbol more fitting than the one which is here described, a mighty angel, coming down from heaven with an open book in his hand.

## LECTURE XXVIII.

## THE MIGHTY ANGEL OF THE SEA AND LAND—CONTINUED.

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.—REV. 10: 5-11.

THE present lecture is closely connected with the preceding one. In that lecture, we supposed the common belief to be correct, viz., that this chapter refers to the Reformation; and we saw how the different parts of the symbol received their fulfillment in history. In the present lecture, we consider two other parts of the symbol, both of which confirm still farther the theory which has been announced, and strengthen the evidence on which our system of interpretation is based.

I. THE OATH of the angel receives its fulfillment in history, and this confirms the theory that this angel is the symbol of the Reformation. "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." With regard to the position of the angel, I need only remind you of what has already been said. The one foot on the sea and the other on the land indicate that the blessings of the Reformation were to extend over the whole world. Continents, islands, and those who go down to the sea in ships, were all to feel its blessed influence.

This angel "lifted up his hand to heaven." This was the usual attitude in taking an oath. Thus Abraham lifted up his hand and swore that he would not receive any of the goods of the king of Sodom, which he had recaptured from the enemy. Thus God again and again lifted up his hand



and made solemn oath with reference to his dealings with the children of Israel. Thus the mighty angel in Daniel's vision, who bears a striking resemblance to the angel of the vision we are now considering, "lifted up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half." If the Bible is to be our guide in this as in everything else, this is the only way in which an oath should be administered. We search its sacred pages in vain for any authority for the practice of kissing the book. The hand lifted to heaven is the proper attitude, which has received the sanction of inspiration and of the Heavenly Father himself. The propriety of this attitude is manifest. It is an appeal to heaven; it calls heaven to witness the truth of the words spoken.

This angel not only swore with uplifted hand, he also made a direct appeal to God. He refers to two of the divine attributes which must increase the solemnity of an oath in the estimation of every oath taker. He first swears by him "that liveth for ever and ever." God, to whom the appeal is made, will ever be a witness for or against him who makes the appeal. If he is faithful in keeping his oath, God will ever be a witness in his favor. If he is not faithful in keeping his oath, God will ever be a witness against him; for God ever lives and changes not. An oath, then, which contains an appeal to the ever-living God, must be one of peculiar solemnity. The angel also refers to the divine attribute of omnipotence. He swore by him who created the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things in them. This, too, gives increased solemnity to the oath. He who is the creator of all things has abundant power to punish. No oath breaker or other offender can hope to escape. No man, who makes an intelligent appeal to the omnipotence of God, will be willing to expose himself to his wrath. And the angel's oath certainly teaches us that there should be in every oath a direct appeal to God. That oath which makes no mention of the name of God or of the attributes by which he has made himself known, is no oath in the scriptural sense of the term. No one can read the words we are now considering without being impressed by the solemnity of the occasion.

We come now to the consideration of something more difficult, viz., the *subject matter* of the angel's oath. He swore "that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Our translation of the first part of the angel's oath naturally conveys the idea that time was about to end and eternity to begin. In this sense these words are frequently used. How often do men, in their remarks and in their prayers, refer to the end of the world as the time when the angel shall stand with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, and swear that time shall be no longer? But a little

reflection must convince every one that this is not the meaning of the angel's oath. The consummation of all things was not then to come, for he proceeds to tell us that the mystery of God would not be finished till the seventh angel had sounded his trumpet; and the following chapters are filled with the account of the wonderful things which were to be thereafter. Whatever, then, this part of the angel's oath may mean, it manifestly does not mean what our translation seems to teach, that time should be no longer; that is, that the affairs of time were to be wound up and that eternity was to begin. What, then, does it mean? I will not attempt to mention the many explanations which have been suggested, or the many translations which have been made. I will refer only to what I believe to be the true explanation and the correct translation. The words which are translated "no longer," could with equal propriety be translated "not yet." In this way I think they should have been translated: "The time should not be yet, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished." This translation plainly conveys the idea that some expected time or season would not then come to pass, but that it would come to pass in the days when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet. Then the mystery of God would be finished.

In order to understand the meaning of the angel's oath, we must determine what is meant by the "mystery of God." A mystery is anything that is mysterious—anything that is concealed from the knowledge of men. A mystery of God means a truth which God has concealed; or rather a truth which he has not communicated to dwellers on the earth. The phrase, as here used, means the divine purpose concerning the destiny of the world, a purpose which had been long concealed, but which had been progressively unfolded by the prophets. And what was that mysterious destiny, as we gather it from the words of the inspired prophets? The work of redemption was to be completed; the Son of man was to come the second time without sin unto salvation; the affairs of the world under the present dispensation were to be wound up; a new heaven and a new earth were to be created, and the Saviour and the saints were to reign for ever and ever. This is the mystery of God. It was not to take place under the sixth trumpet, but when the seventh trumpet should sound, then it should be accomplished; then Christ should come again, and all the things foretold by the prophets would be finished. This I believe to be the meaning of the angel's oath. "The time," that is, the time of the Saviour's second coming, "shall not be yet, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel."

In order to the fulfillment of this part of the symbol, there must have been among the reformers a general expectation that the end of the world was at hand; they must have been waiting for the speedy coming of the Son of man. Was there such an expectation, such a waiting? On this

point there can be no question. The reformers had made the words of the prophets their study. They had learned to regard the Pope as Antichrist. They understood the prophets as teaching that when Antichrist was destroyed, the true Christ would at once set up his kingdom in the world. The rapid progress of the Reformation led them to believe that the Papal church was in the last throes of dissolution. They little knew the vitality of that system of iniquity, and they expected that in a few more years it would be among the things of the past. Therefore, believing as they did that the Papal church was in the last throes of dissolution, they expected and waited for the coming of the Son of man. To show that this statement is correct, listen to the testimony of the reformers themselves. Luther says: "O that God might at length visit us, and cause to shine forth the glory of Christ's kingdom, wherewith to destroy that man of sin." "Easter will come for us, and then we shall sing halleluiah." "The judge is at the door, and will soon pronounce a very different sentence." Melancthon says: "The words of the prophet Elias should be marked by every one and inscribed upon our walls and on the entrances of our houses. Six thousand years is this world to stand, and after that be destroyed; two thousand years before the law, two thousand years under the law of Moses, and two thousand years under the Messiah; and if any of these years are not fulfilled, they will be shortened, a shortening intimated by Christ also on account of our sins." In a note he adds: "Written A. D. 1557, and from the creation of the world, 5519; from which number we may be sure that this aged world is not far from its end." Latimer says: "St. Paul saith, the Lord will not come till a swerving from the faith cometh, which thing is already done and past; Antichrist is known throughout the world; wherefore the day is not far off." "The world was ordained to endure, as all learned men affirm, six thousand years. Now of that number there be past five thousand five hundred and fifty-two years, so that there is no more left but four hundred and forty-eight years; furthermore, even these shall be shortened, for the elect's sake. Therefore all those excellent and learned men, whom without doubt God sent into the world to give the world warning, do gather out of Scripture that the last day cannot be far off."

From these extracts, it is evident that the early reformers expected, with all their hearts, the speedy coming of Christ. It was a part of their life. Every morning they hoped he would come before the setting of the sun; and every evening they hoped he would come before the morning light. It required long experience and a better knowledge of the power of Satan over the hearts of men, and a deeper insight into the word of God to convince them of their error. To convince them of their error required a power which is shadowed forth by the oath of the mighty angel. So far, then, as these words are concerned, there is a resemblance between the

symbol and the things symbolized. The end of the world, though expected, was not to be then, but in the days of the seventh trumpet. All this is properly described in figurative language, by a mighty angel swearing with uplifted hand, by the ever living and omnipotent God, that the time of the Saviour's coming should not be yet, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel.

II. THE ANGEL'S COMMAND receives its fulfillment in history, and confirms still further the conclusion that the angel of the vision is the symbol of the Reformation. This command is, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Before explaining this commandment, it will be necessary to explain the circumstances in which it was given. "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." John had, in the course of this vision, heard a voice from heaven. When he was about to write the words which the seven thunders uttered, this voice had commanded him to seal them up, and write them not. He now hears the same voice, and though he does not tell us whose voice it was, he recognizes it as a voice of authority. This voice now commands him to go and take the book which was open in the hand of the mighty angel. The position of the angel is here referred to for the third time, and this must assure us that his position is an important symbol. What it was a symbol of has already been explained. We have also explained the meaning of the open book which the angel held in his hand. It was the Bible, which had been for many years almost unknown in the church, but which was now given to the world once more in all its purity. This book John was commanded to take from the angel's hand. It is here to be observed that John was acting in a symbolic or representative character. He was an apostle, and his great mission was to preach Christ. He is here to be regarded as a symbol of the gospel ministry at the time of the Reformation. He must be so regarded, or we will not be able to understand the words of the vision.

John obeys the command; he asks the angel for the book; the angel gives it to him with the command to eat it up, and with the intimation that though in his mouth it would be sweet as honey, in its results it would be bitter as the wormwood and the gall. The apostle complies with the

direction, and finds it even as the angel had said. At first it was sweet; afterwards it was bitter. This part of the vision must remind us of the similar vision of Ezekiel. The roll of a book was presented to him, a book which was filled with lamentations, mourning and woe. He was commanded to eat it, and when he had eaten it, it was in his mouth as honey for sweetness. Perhaps one of these visions will help us to understand the other. What, then, is meant by eating the book? Of course, it is to be understood as a figure; but it is a figure which it is not difficult to understand, for similar figures are common in daily speech. How often do we speak of drinking in instruction, of devouring a volume, of digesting the contents of a book? All these figures are near of kin to the one in the passage before us. What, then, does it mean? It means that John, or rather those whom he represented, that is, the gospel ministry at the time of the Reformation, were hungry for the word of God; that when an opportunity presented itself they devoured it with all the eagerness of famishing souls; that it was at first sweet to their taste, but that in its consequences, as for example in the persecutions which came upon them, it was bitter.

This is the obvious meaning of these symbols. It is for us to inquire whether they receive any fulfillment in history at the time of the Reformation. It is well known that the early reformers, whom John is supposed to typify, were hungry for the word of God, and that when it was put into their hands they devoured its contents, as starving men devour food. It is also known that they found great joy and pleasure in the revelations and promises of the word, and that when they attempted to make their perishing fellows acquainted with the word, the persecutions which they suffered from the Papal church were bitter. As an illustration, I refer to Luther, who more than any other man was the embodiment of the Reformation. In my last lecture, I spoke of the way in which he was first enlightened by the accidental finding of a copy of the Scriptures, of the eagerness with which he studied it, and of the joy which he found in its study. A few years afterwards, he and his friends were excommunicated by the Pope and threatened with death by the civil power. So great was Luther's danger, that his friend, the Elector of Saxony, felt that there was no way in which to hide the great reformer from the storm, and to save his life, except to confine him in a lonely castle in the forest of Wartburg. In this castle, which he called his "Patmos," he spent a year; but he was not idle. He translated the Bible into the German language. It was as if he heard the voice from heaven saying unto him, Take the book from the angel's hand; for he did take the book and make it known to others. And in his work of studying and translating the Scriptures, he found great joy. In one of his letters, written at this time, he says, "you can scarce believe with what reluctance I have allowed my attention to be diverted from the quiet study of the Scriptures in this Patmos." But he afterwards found that the

consequences of preaching the word were bitter enough. On one occasion, he said, "if I should write of the heavy burden of a godly preacher, which he must carry and endure, as I know by my experience, I should scare every man from the office of preaching." As it was with Luther, so it was with the other reformers. The little book which they received from the angel, and which they devoured with all eagerness, was at first sweet to their taste, though it afterwards became to them as the wormwood and the gall.

We now come to the command of the angel. "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." This command was addressed to John in his representative character; that is, it was addressed to the ministry of the Reformation. They are commanded to prophesy. The word "prophesy" has a narrow and restricted sense in which it is sometimes used. In this sense, it means to foretell future events. But the word is also used in the wider sense of making known divine truth, whether that truth refers to the future, the present, or the past. This is the sense in which it is used most frequently in the New Testament; and this is its meaning here. In this sense, a prophet is the same thing as a preacher, and to prophesy would be the same thing as to preach the gospel. Therefore, the command to the ministry of the Reformation is to "preach the gospel." But they are also commanded to preach the gospel "again." This implies that it had been preached before; and so it had been. In the apostolic age, the preaching of the gospel had been the great duty of the ministers of religion. We have not forgotten how Paul and Silas, everywhere in their missionary journey, entered into the synagogues and preached Christ and him crucified. We have not forgotten how Paul charged his spiritual children, who were ordained to the ministerial office, to "preach the word." We have not forgotten how all the apostles were distinguished as preachers. And this state of things continued for a time after the last of the apostles had been called to his rest. Then rites and ceremonies began to creep into the church, and as they were observed and loved, the simple preaching of the word occupied less attention. In the middle ages, which immediately preceded the Reformation, it was almost entirely neglected. What little preaching there was, was not the preaching of the word of God; it was the exposition of the fables and legends of the saints. This seems to be the inevitable result of ritualism. When great stress is laid upon rites and ceremonies of human invention, the preaching of the word is neglected. This is seen in the ritualistic churches of the present day. But at the time of the Reformation, the ministers of religion were commanded to preach the gospel again, as it had been preached in the days of the apostles. And they did. They went back to first principles. They imitated the example of Christ, and Paul, and Peter. They began to preach the word in the demonstration

and power of the Spirit. To this day, one great characteristic by which the Protestant church is distinguished from every other is the prominence which is given to the preaching of the word. In it, rites and ceremonies occupy a secondary place. Thus, this part of the symbol finds its fulfillment in history. The early reformers preached the gospel again.

The persons, to whom they were commanded to preach, are enumerated: "peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." And this part of the commandment was obeyed. In the year 1522, Luther returned from his lonely castle in Wartburg, and began his preaching in Wittenberg; and in two or three years we are told of its successful preaching before princes as well as people, not in Germany alone, but also in Sweden, and Denmark, and France, and Belgium, and Spain, and Italy, and England. "The Lord gave the word, and great was the company of preachers." Thus, this part of the symbol is fulfilled in history.

In view of what has been said in this and the previous lecture, are we not authorized to conclude that this beautiful chapter refers to the Reformation? All parts of the vision have received their fulfillment. The character of the angel, his appearance, his open book, his position, his cry, and the seven thunders which answered it, his oath, and his command, are all fulfilled in the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

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## LECTURE XXIX.

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### THE MEASURING OF THE TEMPLE.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.—REV. 11: 1, 2.

THE vision which is described in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter is intimately connected with the vision described in the previous chapter. In fact, they are but parts of the same great vision, and they should not have been separated. In this instance, as in others, the division of the chapter is unfortunate; it tends to confuse and mislead the mind. Therefore, to understand the meaning and application of the measurement of the symbolical temple, we must remember the points of the preceding vision. John saw a mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, with a rainbow upon his head, with a face like the sun and feet like fire, and with an open book in his hand. This angel was the symbol of the Reformation.

mation, and the little book was the symbol of the Bible, which was then brought to the knowledge of men and which was the principal agent of the Reformation. The apostle then heard the peal of seven thunders, and when he was about to write the words which the thunders uttered, as if they were the words of God, he was commanded to write them not. These thunders were symbols of the anathemas of the Vatican, which were so often promulgated against the early reformers, and which the reformers at first regarded and feared as the authoritative utterances of the church of Christ, but which they soon learned were not worthy of regard or obedience. The apostle then saw another angel standing upon the sea and land, who swore with a great and solemn oath that the time which the church was then expecting, even the end of the world, should not be yet, but in the days when the seventh angel should sound his trumpet. The apostle was then commanded to take and eat the book, and he was assured that at first it would be sweet to his taste, though the remote results would be bitter as the wormwood and the gall; an act which symbolized the duty of the church to devour and digest the word of Christ, and the consequences which would follow the performance of this duty, viz., inward peace and joy, and afterwards outward persecution and oppression. Finally, the apostle was assured that he must prophesy before nations and kings, an assurance which was fulfilled in the revival of preaching, which attended and followed the Reformation. It is just at this point John is commanded to measure the temple.

If we have been correct in our exposition of the previous lecture, then certainly this vision must also refer to the Reformation; and we will not fall into error if we look for its fulfillment about the time of Luther. In considering this vision, I will, in the first place, explain the symbols and their meaning; and in the second place, I will endeavor to find their fulfillment in history.

I. THE SYMBOLS of this vision are few, and easily understood. The apostle was commanded to measure the temple and the altar, and to number the worshipers in the temple. For this purpose a measuring reed was put into his hands. He was also commanded to leave out the court of the temple, for this was given to the Gentiles, who would tread the holy city under foot for forty and two months. These are the symbols. Let us consider them one by one.

1. The first symbol is *the measuring reed*. We are not told who gave it to the apostle. It may have been given to him by the angel, or by a detached hand, like that which wrote upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace; but this is a matter of no importance. It is sufficient for us to know that it was put in John's hand, and that he was instructed as to the use to which it was to be applied. The word translated "reed," as is well known,



describes a plant with a hollow stalk, growing in wet ground. Then the word is used to describe the stalk as cut for use. Sometimes it means a scepter, as when it is said that the Roman soldiers put a reed in the Saviour's hand on the day of his crucifixion. Sometimes it means a pen, as when John says in his third epistle, "I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and *pen* write unto thee." Sometimes, as manifestly in the present instance, it means a measuring stick. This measuring reed is further described as resembling a "rod." The word which is thus translated is sometimes applied to a stick for scourging; sometimes, to a staff for walking; and sometimes, to a scepter as a symbol of authority. The last is the signification which most commonly attaches to the word in the Holy Scriptures. And this is, I think, its signification here. This measuring reed which was put in the apostle's hand, in some respects resembled and suggested a scepter. This indicates that the measuring of the temple and the altar was to be done with authority, and that he who held the rod had a right to do what he was commanded to do. This is an important point, as we will see in the sequel, and I ask that it be borne in mind. The measuring reed resembled a scepter, to indicate that the measurement of the temple and its separation from the outer court were by authority.

2. Notice *the things to which this measuring scepter was to be applied.* These things are enumerated in the last clause of the first verse. It might be remarked, just here, that the clause "the angel stood," is omitted by the best critics. Without question, the command came from the same source from which he received the scepter. It cannot, therefore, change the meaning whether the clause is rejected or retained. The command is "rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." There seems to be some incongruity in commanding John to measure those who worshiped in the temple, but the meaning is so obvious that it cannot be mistaken. He was to number them and examine into their character. It must be manifest that this command does not refer to the real temple and altar. According to the system of interpretation which has been adopted, the temple and altar at Jerusalem were destroyed years before John's exile in Patmos began. And even if this temple and altar had been in existence at this time, Jerusalem was far from Patmos, and it was not in the power of the lonely exile in that island to measure them. Therefore, the temple and altar must be regarded as symbols. Bear in mind the heavenly scenery to which attention has been called again and again. On the celestial plain, on which the throne of God and the living creatures and the four and twenty elders were standing, John saw many things. Among these he saw a temple with its altar and courts, fashioned after the temple of the Jewish economy. This was the temple which John was commanded to measure. Of what was this temple

the symbol? To this question every one acquainted with the literature of the New Testament must return the answer, the temple is the symbol of the true church. Listen to the words of Paul: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "The temple of God is holy: which temple ye are." If, then, the temple is the symbol of the true church, the simple meaning of the command we are now considering would be, that a correct and authoritative measurement was to be made of the true church; that is, the characteristics of the true church were to be carefully noted and minutely described. They were to be so described that it would be distinguished from all other bodies of men; its constitution, its ordinances and its ceremonies were to be fixed and known. This symbol would be fulfilled, if at any time there was need, for any cause, to inquire what constituted the true church, to separate it from other organizations which claimed to be the true church, and to define its constitution, its ordinances and its ceremonies. Whether there ever was such a time, we will have occasion to inquire by and by.

The apostle was directed to measure not only the symbolical temple, but also the symbolical altar. Of course reference is made to the altar of burnt offering, which was in the court of the temple, and not to the altar of incense, which was in the temple itself. We all know the prominent place which this altar occupied in the Jewish worship. On it every sacrifice had to be laid. It was, therefore, the place of sacrifice, which sanctified the gifts laid thereon. Hence, the altar becomes a symbol of the means necessary in order to reconciliation with God, for it is only by sacrifice that reconciliation can be made. "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." In other words, the altar becomes a symbol of the atonement of Christ, for he is the only sacrifice who can take away sin and make the comers thereto perfect. To measure the altar, would be to examine into the doctrine of the atonement, to define it clearly, and to distinguish it from any false views which might be entertained. This symbol would be fulfilled, if the church should ever have occasion, on account of prevailing wickedness, to re-investigate and publish anew the truth concerning the atonement, as that truth is taught in the Holy Scriptures. Whether there ever was such an occasion, we will inquire by and by.

The apostle was also directed to make a careful examination of those who worshiped in the temple, of their character, their piety, their profession and their lives. This would be fulfilled if the church should ever have occasion to ascertain who were true members in it, and what was necessary in order to constitute true membership. Whether there ever was such an occasion, we will inquire by and by.

It is evident, therefore, that three things are implied in the command, "Measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein," viz., a determination of what constitutes the true church; of what the word

of God teaches concerning the great doctrine of the atonement ; and of what are the qualifications of membership in the church.

3. But there was that connected with the temple, *which was not to be measured* or defined. "The court which is without the temple, leave out." The reference here is without doubt to the outermost court of the Jewish temple, which was called the court of the Gentiles, which the uncircumcised might enter, but which marked the nearest approach they were permitted to make to the holy shrine. This court might seem to an observer to be a part of the temple, and those who stood in this court might seem to be worshipers of God ; and yet in reality it formed no part of the temple, and those who stood in it and came no nearer the ark of the covenant were not true worshipers. This outer court the apostle was not to measure. Though it might seem to be a part of the temple, he was not to regard it as such. And he was not only commanded not to measure it, he was also commanded to "leave it out"; or as it is expressed in the margin, "to cast it out"; an expression which implies something more than a mere passing by, or omission. It implies that by some positive act he was to indicate that it was not the true temple, and that those who worshiped in it were not true worshipers. That this is the correct idea is made more manifest by the words which follow; "for it is given unto the Gentiles." As the Gentiles under the former dispensation were not members of the Jewish church, so the symbolical Gentiles of the vision could not be members of the true church. They might seem to be members, they might claim to be members, but the apostle was commanded to leave them out of the temple proper, and to give up to their use the court of the Gentiles. That this is the correct idea is made still more manifest by the words which conclude the subject of the present lecture; "but the holy city they shall tread under foot forty and two months." Of course the reference is to Jerusalem, the holy city of the Jewish economy, in which God specially dwelt, and in which the people of God performed their most solemn acts of worship. This holy city, like the holy temple, is a symbol of the true church. It is so often used in this way, that when we call the church Jerusalem or Zion, we hardly think that we are using a figure of speech. These symbolical Gentiles, according to the vision, were to tread the true church "under their feet"; an expression drawn from the custom of ancient conquerors, who placed their feet upon the neck of their vanquished foes. This part of the vision, then, points to a time when the church would be persecuted, overthrown, and well nigh destroyed by its enemies; and these enemies were to be those who might seem to a careless observer to be a part of the church, or at least related to the church. This treading of the church under foot was to continue "forty and two months"; that is, one thousand two hundred and sixty days. But these are prophetic days; and it is a well established principle of interpretation that a prophetic day represents a year. Therefore, the trials of the church,

which arose from the persecutions of these symbolical Gentiles, were to be for one thousand two hundred and sixty years. This part of the symbol would be fulfilled, if at any time there were men who claimed to belong to the church, and who, to a careless observer, might seem to belong to the church, but who in reality were spiritual Gentiles; and if these men persecuted the church for one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Whether there ever was such a time, we will have occasion to inquire by and by.

II. These are the symbols of the vision, and this is their natural meaning. We come now to consider their application. In other words, we are to inquire whether these symbols have received A FULFILLMENT IN HISTORY. If it is true, as has already been said, that this vision is intimately connected with the preceding one, and if it is true that that vision finds its fulfillment in the Reformation, then we would expect that this vision would find its fulfillment about the same time. Let us turn to the history of the church, about this time, and see if we can discover any events which are properly described by the symbolical language we have been considering.

One of the first questions which the reformers had to answer was, what is the true church? They withdrew themselves from the church of Rome and formed a new organization, which was properly constituted according to the rules laid down in the word of God for the regulation of the church of Christ. It addressed itself to this question, and by its acts and decrees it defined what constituted a true church. In other words, it measured the temple of God, and it measured it with a measuring reed which was like a scepter; for it had the royal authority of its King and Head. These statements require no proof. They are familiar to every one who has ever read the history of the sixteenth century. In the days of the Reformation, the church was re-formed; it was measured with a measuring reed which resembled a scepter; the characteristics of the true church were so clearly set forth that they may not be called in question even at the present day.

Another subject which early claimed the attention of the reformers was the doctrine of the atonement. The church of Rome had greatly perverted this doctrine. They taught that the sacrament of the supper was a sacrifice, that the Lord's table was an altar, and that the officiating minister was a priest. They maintained that the sacrifice of the mass was necessary in order to make atonement for the worshipers. But the reformers investigated these teachings and re-discovered the true apostolic doctrine, that Jesus by one sacrifice of himself put an end to the offering of sacrifices, and that the continual sacrifice of the mass was a folly and a sin.

Another question which the early reformers were called to answer was, who are the members of the true church? The church of Rome believed in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and maintained that those who were baptized were members of the true church, and that all such baptized

persons were sure of heaven. But the reformers bore testimony against this perversion of Scripture. They taught the necessity of faith and a change of heart; and they maintained that none but believers were true members of the church. All this is symbolized by numbering the worshipers in the temple, and distinguishing them from all others.

Still further: the reformers drew a line of separation between themselves and others members of the so-called Christian church. While they did not deny that there might be some faithful followers of Christ in the Papal communion, they claimed and proved that the Papal church was Antichrist. All this is symbolized by the leaving out of the court of the Gentiles; for the members of the church of Rome claimed to be a part of the temple of God, and by a careless observer they might be regarded as a part of that temple.

Still further: these nominal Christians, who were left out of the true church, persecuted and laid waste that church for many years. That this was the case all history abundantly testifies. The true church was long trodden under foot by the church of Rome. With regard to the exact duration of the persecuting power of the Papal church, that is, one thousand two hundred and sixty years, I will say but little in this connection, for I will have occasion to discuss it at length in subsequent lectures. The precise time when the church of Rome became entitled to the name of Antichrist, and when the Pope of Rome claimed supreme power over the earthly church cannot, perhaps, be fixed. Some authors have adopted one date; others have adopted another. But this we know; it was some time after the year 600. If we consider this year as the beginning of the Papal power, then one thousand two hundred and sixty years would bring the termination of that power down to the latter half of the present century. And, as during recent years we have been permitted to see the Pope stripped of his temporal power, fulminating his anathemas in vain, and lying like a helpless wreck in the way of advancing Christianity, we may well believe that we have seen, or that we are about to see, the end of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years, during which the Gentiles were to tread under foot the holy city of God.

This, in few words, is the meaning and application of the vision we have considered. It shadows forth the re-formation of the church which took place at the time of the Reformation. It symbolizes the time when what constitutes the true church, and the true atonement, and true membership in the church were clearly established. It points unmistakably to the new order of things, which was introduced into the church at the time of the Reformation.

## LECTURE XXX.

## THE TWO WITNESSES.

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devour-eth their enemies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.—REV. 11 : 8-8.

THE vision which is the subject of the present lecture, is one of no ordinary difficulty. It would be a laborious and profitless task to enumerate the explanations which have been given. I will therefore sp in telling what others believe to be true ; I will proceed to unfold the interpretation which my investigation has led me to believe to be the correct one. There is no difficulty in understanding the vision itself ; it is plainly and vividly described. The apostle saw two witnesses, verses 3, 4 ; he saw the wonderful power they exercised on the earth, verses 5, 6 ; he saw their defeat and death, verses 7, 8 ; he saw their resurrection and triumph, verses 9-12 ; he saw the effect of their triumph upon the children of men, verse 13. There is no difficulty in understanding these emblems ; the difficulty is in finding their fulfillment ; in other words, the difficulty is in determining what events in history these symbols were designed to shadow forth. To this difficult task I now address myself. So much is included in this vision, that it will be necessary to study more than ordinary brevity. To assist in this, I invite your attention to these points : 1, the two witnesses ; 2, their power ; 3, their defeat ; 4, their triumph ; 5, its effects.

I. Let us turn our attention to THE TWO WITNESSES ; for if we can reach a clear understanding of the persons symbolized by them, we will have no difficulty in understanding the rest of the vision. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." We all know what a witness is. He is one who in word, or in deed, or in both, bears testimony to some truth or fact. These witnesses God calls "my witnesses." They must therefore be witnesses who bear testimony for God, for the truth of his gospel, and for his church. It is worthy of remark

and remembrance, that the word translated "witness" is the word from which our word "martyr" is derived. A martyr, according to present usage, is one who suffers persecution and death on account of his adherence to the truth, especially religious truth; but the word originally described an ordinary witness. It is easy to see how the word changed its signification. In early times, witness-bearing for Christ and for the truth of his gospel did not lead to honor and preferment; it led to prison, to the stake, and to death. Therefore, in those early times to be a witness for Christ was the same thing as to be a martyr; and the words martyr and witness became synonymous in meaning. Who are God's witnesses on earth? Neither angels nor wicked men are called by this name in the inspired word. The honor and duty of witness-bearing belong solely to the true members of the true church. Again and again is it said of them, "ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." It is also said that the gospel, which they live and preach, is to be a witness through the whole world. It is therefore evident that the witnesses here referred to, whoever they are, must be true Christians, and they must live in times when to be a witness meant to be a martyr.

These witnesses are said to be "two" in number. It is evident that the reference cannot be to two individuals, for they were to continue their prophesying for one thousand two hundred and sixty days; that is, for one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days, or one thousand two hundred and sixty years; and this period is far beyond the duration of two individual lives. The reference must be to a succession of true Christians, who through one thousand two hundred and sixty years would bear continual testimony to the truth of God. Individuals might die, and would die, but others would rise up to take their places, so that the line of testimony would, through all these years, remain unbroken. We are, then, for the fulfillment of this part of the vision to look through the centuries which preceded the Reformation, and see whether there were such men, who bore testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, and who sealed their testimony with their blood. That there were such men cannot be questioned. Protestant historians record their names and the testimony which they bore. Catholic historians bear witness to the same fact. It is true, they describe these men as heretics; they maintain that it was just to persecute them and put them to death; but the account which they give of their doctrines and their manner of life shows that they were true witnesses for Christ, even unto death. I have not time to trace this line of faithful witnesses. To do this accurately would require a volume; and it is done in the standard histories of the church. It must suffice to say that all history, Catholic as well as Protestant, reveals the fact that God, even in the darkest ages, did not leave himself without a witness. There were always men who rejected the idolatries, the immoralities, the superstitions, and the false teachings of the church of Rome, and held fast to the truth

as taught by the Saviour and his apostles. They were as lights shining in a dark place. They were witnesses for God.

What is meant when it is said that these witnesses were "two" in number? To answer this question we must turn to the rules of evidence, as laid down in the Mosaic law for the government of the Jewish nation. No fact could be established by the testimony of one witness; there had to be in every case at least two. The language of the law is, "at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." This language is repeated more than once in the Scriptures. Two witnesses were, therefore, the least number which could establish any fact. The meaning of this part of the symbol would be that the witnesses for God, during the period here referred to, would be few in number; that while they would be sufficient to establish the truth, they would be no more than sufficient. And history teaches us that while there were true Christians during the dark ages, these Christians were few in number. They were barely sufficient to keep the line of testimony unbroken.

The next thing which claims our attention is the condition of these few but sufficient witnesses for the truth. They are said to prophesy "clothed in sackcloth." Sackcloth, that is, a coarse, black cloth, commonly made of hair, is universally recognized as an emblem of sorrow and mourning. The meaning of this part of the symbol is manifest. God's witnesses were to give in their testimony with sorrow and mourning. The times in which they were to live were to be times of calamity. Their witness-bearing would expose them to trouble and distress. That this was the case, history abundantly proves. The few scattered saints of God were everywhere persecuted; they were driven from their homes; they were imprisoned; they were put to death with the most cruel tortures. As we read the history of those times, we wonder not that God's witnesses were so few; the wonder is that there were any who were courageous enough to continue faithful to the end. All this is symbolized by the fact that the witnesses were clothed in sackcloth.

The next thing which claims our attention is the period during which the witnesses clothed in sackcloth gave in their testimony. It was for one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days; that is, for one thousand two hundred and sixty years. This does not mean that this was the whole period during which they were to bear testimony, but the period during which they were to bear testimony while clothed in sackcloth. They might bear testimony with joy before the beginning of this period; they might bear testimony in royal robes after its close; but during that period they were to bear testimony with sorrow and in sackcloth. This period carries us back to the preceding vision, for the forty and two months of that vision are exactly equivalent to the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of this. The witnesses, then, were to



prophecy in sorrow through the whole time during which the spiritual Gentiles were to tread the holy city under their feet; that is, as explained in the last lecture, during the whole time the church of Rome persecuted the members of the true church; a period which began about the year 600, when the Pope of Rome claimed for himself supreme authority over the earthly church, and continued for one thousand two hundred and sixty years, till the latter half of the present century, when the pope was stripped of his temporal power and was no longer able to do injury to the saints of God. That we are not mistaken in our interpretation appears evident from verse 4, in which the two witnesses are described as "the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." The reference is, without question, to the vision of Zechariah, 4: 1-14. In this vision the prophet saw a golden candlestick or lampstand, and two olive trees by its side. These two olive trees poured a continual stream of oil through golden pipes into the lamp, so that the lamp was never extinguished. When the prophet declared his inability to understand the symbol, the angel explained it by saying, "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." According to this explanation the two olive trees are symbols of ministers who, through divine appointment and grace, supply spiritual oil to the church, of which the candlestick is the undoubted symbol. Therefore, the two witnesses, who are compared to the candlestick and the olive trees must be, not two individuals, but a succession of true Christians, composed of faithful ministers and faithful churches.

I ask that this explanation be fixed in memory, and then we can with greater rapidity pass over the rest of the vision. The two witnesses are the few faithful saints of God, who, during the whole of Papal supremacy, bore testimony to the truth of God.

II. We are to consider THE POWER of the two witnesses. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." In the first place, the witnesses had power over their enemies. They would kill and devour those who injured them with the fire which proceeded out of their mouth. The meaning of this symbol is obvious from other passages of Scripture. Thus the Lord said to the prophet Jeremiah: "I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them"; that is, the words which God's servants should speak in his name should be as a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity. These words would declare the judgments of God and predict their coming; and in due time they would

come; and then those who would dare to hurt the members of the true church would be devoured and killed. That this part of the symbol was fulfilled is evident from history. The faithful servants of God during the long night of the dark ages preached the truth, denounced the corruptions of the church of Rome, and proclaimed the just judgments of God. And these judgments of God, when they came, destroyed the enemies of the truth.

In the second place, these witnesses had power "to shut heaven, that it rain not." They were men of prayer, and through prayer they had power with God. The meaning of the words we are considering may be that they prevailed to shut the literal heaven, so that for a season there should be neither dew nor rain upon the earth. The consequences would be famine, starvation and death. We know that some of the saints of God, as notably Elijah the Tishbite, were permitted to exercise such power. But it is more probable that the reference is to figurative rain. By figurative rain is meant the spiritual blessings which are revealed in and promised by the word of God. Thus it is said in Isaiah, "for as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, so shall my word be." Thus it is said in the Psalms, "he shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth." Thus it is said in the law, "my doctrine shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall distill as the dew." The meaning, then, of this part of the symbol would be that spiritual blessings would seem to be under the control of the two witnesses; that in answer to their prayers, they would be given or they would be withheld. And it is a well known fact, that during all the time here referred to, there was neither spiritual rain nor dew upon the earth but at the word of the two witnesses; there was no salvation but through the truth which they preached; there was no outpouring of the Spirit but in answer to their prayers. The world was perishing through spiritual famine.

In the third place, the two witnesses had power to bring calamities upon the earth, to turn water into blood, and to smite the world and its inhabitants with plagues. This does not mean that they had this power in themselves, but that calamities were sent in answer to their prayers, and through their instrumentality. Such power Moses and the prophets were permitted to exercise. No one can read the history of the dark ages without feeling that a similar power was given to the saints of God at that time. Wars and plagues, and famine and calamities of every kind visited the nations. Though in these things we are not permitted to see the instrumentality of the persecuted saints, yet the analogy of faith leads us to believe that their sorrows, their cries and their blood were instrumental in calling down the vengeance of heaven. If our eyes were opened, as they shall be when we shall reach the land of light and shall see clearly

the relation of cause and effect, and the hand of God in all the events of history, we would see the connection between the prayers and persecutions of the martyrs and the calamities which have visited the nations of the world; for it is a truth established by revelation and experience, that the fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.

III. We are to consider **THE DEFEAT AND DEATH** of the two witnesses. "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." In these verses several circumstances are mentioned, which must be considered separately.

In the first place, we are to determine the time when the two witnesses should be defeated and put to death. It should be when they had finished their testimony. Does this refer to the end of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years, or to some period during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years? In other words, does the finishing here spoken of, refer to the completion of the time during which the witnesses were to testify, or to the completeness of the testimony which they were to give? The word translated "finished," is used in both senses in the New Testament. It is used with reference to time, when it is said, "till the thousand years be fulfilled" or finished. It is used with reference to the complete accomplishment of the object intended to be accomplished, when it is said, "if ye fulfill" or finish "the royal law according to the Scriptures." I believe it is used in the latter sense in the passage we are now considering. It refers to any time during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years when the witnesses had borne a full and complete testimony—a testimony so full and complete that it included the whole truth, to which nothing was to be added and from which nothing was to be taken. When the martyrs had finished or completed their testimony, completed it not in time but in matter, then they should be defeated and killed. Let it be remembered that by the two witnesses is meant a line of true saints, which extended through many centuries. These true saints testified against the corruptions of the church of Rome. Individuals might die, and did die, but others were raised up in their places. It is not to be supposed that these true saints at first bore a complete testimony. As they gradually became acquainted with the false teachings of the Roman church and with the true teaching of the word of God, they would enlarge their testimony. Thus they would advance in their testimony, until at last it would become complete. This was actually the case. In the creeds and confessions of the persecuted church, and in the acts and decrees of its synods and councils, we can trace its growth in truth, until a complete

testimony was finished. Then the church testified against every error and in favor of every truth contained in the word of God. This occurred not long before the Reformation. The creeds of some of the persecuted churches at that time, as for example the Waldenses and Albigenses, are full and evangelical, as full and evangelical as the creeds of the Protestant churches of to-day. The members of these churches were poor, despised, and little known, but they were enough to bear competent testimony, and they did bear competent and complete testimony. At this time, then, we fix the defeat and death of the witnesses, for just before the Reformation they had finished and completed their testimony; that is, they had borne a complete testimony.

In the second place, we will have to determine what is meant by the beast, by which the witnesses were defeated and killed. This is the first time in this book in which "the beast" is mentioned, but it is frequently mentioned in subsequent chapters, and always with the same characteristics. Let us enumerate some of the most prominent of these characteristics, for they will help us in determining what the beast is. Its origin is from the bottomless pit. It has great power over the nations, for it deceived them with lying wonders; and over the true followers of Christ, for it was able to overcome them and kill them. It claimed and received from men the worship which is due to God alone. It had one particular place in the world, from which it exercised its power, and which is called its seat or its throne. Its power was to continue for forty and two prophetic months, that is, one thousand two hundred and sixty years. When viewed from our standpoint, these characteristics can be fulfilled only in the Papal church. It had its origin from beneath, from the bottomless pit. If judged by its teachings or by its immoral practices, it must be the offspring of the father of lies, the prince of darkness. Its power over the nations has been great, for it has ruled them with a rod of iron. It has slain thousands upon thousands of the followers of Jesus. It has been worshiped by millions as if it was God, sitting in the place of God. It had a particular place, which was the centre of its authority, even the city of Rome, which was for many years the mistress of the world. It began to exercise its supreme authority about the year 600, and it is only within the last few years that it has been stripped of its temporal power. Therefore, it has continued for one thousand two hundred and sixty years. We are then brought to the conclusion that the beast which made war against the witnesses and overcame them is the church of Rome. That the church of Rome did make war with the true saints, whom she honored with the name of heretics, is well known. The stakes, and the racks, and the prisons, and the inquisitions, which it used with so much success, have not been forgotten. The souls of unnumbered martyrs under the heavenly altar still testify to the truth of the description that the beast which ascended out of the bottomless pit made war against the saints and overcame them.

Their defeat was total. It seemed as if the line of true confessors was extinct. The fulfillment of this part of the symbol is not difficult to discover. The Papal church persecuted the true church with success. About the beginning of the sixteenth century, true religion seemed to be unknown. The Lollards of England, the Waldenses of Italy, and all the scattered and organized bands of Christ's followers had been reduced to silence. At the Council of Lateran, which assembled in 1513, and continued its sessions about four years, all heretics, as they were called, were required to appear before the council and answer for their belief. But none appeared. The authorities of the church of Rome could find none to visit with persecution. As the council was about to close its labors, an orator of the council ascended the pulpit, and amidst the acclamations of the assembled prelates proclaimed: "No one answers; no one resists; the whole body of Christendom is seen to be subject to its head, the Pope." At that time it seemed as if every true witness was killed. Listen to the testimony of history: "The sixteenth century opened with a prospect of all others the most gloomy, in the eyes of every true Christian. Corruption, both in doctrine and in practice, had exceeded all bounds; and the general face of Europe, though the name of Christ was everywhere professed, presented nothing that was properly evangelical. The Waldenses were too feeble to molest the pope-dom; and the Hussites, divided among themselves, and worn out by a long series of contentions, were reduced to silence. Among both were found persons of undoubted godliness, but they appeared incapable of making effectual impressions on the kingdom of Antichrist. The Roman pontiffs were still the uncontrolled patrons of impiety; neither the scandalous crimes of Alexander VI, nor the military ferocity of Julius II, seemed to have lessened the dominion of the court of Rome, or to have opened the eyes of men so as to induce them to make a sober investigation of the nature of true religion." Milner's History of the Church. "At the commencement of the sixteenth century, Europe reposed in the deep sleep of spiritual death, under the iron yoke of the Papacy. That haughty power, like the Assyrian of the prophet, said in the plenitude of his insolence, 'My hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs, I have gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth or peeped.'" Cunninghame. "Everything was quiet; every heretic was exterminated, and the whole Christian world supinely acquiesced in the enormous absurdities inculcated by the Romish church." Encyclopedia Britannica, article Reformation. These quotations show the propriety of the language we have been considering.

We are, finally, to determine the place in which the defeat and death of the witnesses were to occur. It was in "the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." The city was not Sodom, or Egypt, or Jerusalem where our Lord was literally

crucified. It was only called so "spiritually," that is, figuratively or metaphorically. The great sin of Sodom was its wickedness, especially its licentiousness. The great sin of Egypt was its oppression of the people of God. The great sin of Jerusalem was its crucifixion of Christ. The place which is called metaphorically by these names must be a place distinguished for these sins. Such a place was the church of Rome. The licentiousness of its popes, and bishops, and priests, and members, as recorded by its own writers, is too shameful to be repeated. Its oppressions and persecutions of the true people of God were seven-fold worse than the oppressions and persecutions which Israel endured in Egypt. And, without controversy, it crucified, according to the language of Scripture, the Lord of glory and put him to an open shame, by its unbelief and its immoralities. We are, therefore, brought to the conclusion that the two witnesses were to be defeated and put to death within the limits of the church of Rome, which is well called metaphorically "Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." That this was the place in which the witnesses were killed is evident from what has already been said.

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## LECTURE XXXI.

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### THE TWO WITNESSES.—CONTINUED.

And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.—REV. 11: 9-18.

In the present lecture we continue and conclude our explanation of the vision of the two witnesses. We were to consider the vision under five heads, viz: the two witnesses; their power; their defeat and death; their resurrection and triumph; and the effect of their triumph upon the children of men. Three of these heads were discussed in the last lecture; the other two are to be discussed in this.

IV. We are to notice THE RESURRECTION AND TRIUMPH of the witnesses as they are described in verses 9-12. Let us consider, one by one,

the circumstances mentioned in these verses, for a clear understanding of the several circumstances will lead us to a clear understanding of the entire vision.

1. Let us consider *the indignities* which were heaped upon the bodies of the witnesses while they awaited their coming resurrection. "And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." The persons by whom these indignities were to be done were not to be confined to any one tribe or nation; they would be of all people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations. Those who offered these indignities would be many. The language of the verse we are now considering, viz., "they of the people, &c.," may refer, as this phrase does sometimes refer, to some such representative body as the Council of Lateran, which, as we have seen, publicly proclaimed the defeat and apparent overthrow of the witnesses. But the phrase in this instance is rather to be understood as pointing to the fact that the indignities here referred to were to be general. Men of all peoples and nations were to be engaged in the disgraceful and unholy business.

The length of time during which the bodies of the witnesses were to be exposed to indignities, even three days and a half, will be noticed by and by. Let us now attend to the indignities themselves. The dead bodies of the martyred saints were not to be buried; their persecutors would not suffer them to be put in graves. For a body to be cast out upon the earth as a worthless thing and to be left as a spectacle for men and a prey for beasts, has in every age been counted as the greatest indignity. Among the heathen such a fate was regarded as the greatest calamity, for they thought that the spirit was shut out from rest and compelled to endure ceaseless and weary wanderings till its body was decently interred. Though we know that it makes but little difference where the dead body reposes, and that the angels can safely guard and keep the lifeless dust of the saints in one place as well as in another, yet we shrink back in no feigned horror from the thought that our dead body may be unburied and uncared for. The prospect of Christian burial takes away some terrors from approaching death. But it appears that the bodies of the defeated witnesses were denied such burial; and this was true, both literally and figuratively. It is literally true that the bodies of the martyred saints, during the days referred to, were not put in graves with the rites of Christian burial. One of the punishments which was constantly enforced by the church of Rome against heretics was their exclusion from burial, as persons who were without the pale of the church. Council after council decreed that heretics should not receive Christian burial. The body of Wickliffe was exhumed. The ashes of John Huss were thrown into Lake Constance. One of the penalties which one of the popes decreed against Luther and his followers was that they should

be deprived of Christian burial. All these things are too well known to require proof. Therefore, it is literally true that those who persecuted the martyrs would not suffer their dead bodies to be put into graves. But it is also true in a figurative sense. The persecutors showed such dishonor to the witnesses as would be shown to the dead if they were not permitted to be interred decently. That the witnesses for Christ were in those dark ages treated with indignity so great it can be compared to nothing but the exposure of an unburied body, which all men everywhere have counted shameful, is well known. Living or dead, they were esteemed no better than the beasts of the field, no better than the worms which are, without thought or compunction, trodden under foot. Therefore, it is both literally and figuratively true that the dead bodies of the martyred saints were not suffered to be put in graves.

2. The next thing which attracts our attention is *the general rejoicing* which followed the death of the witnesses and preceded their resurrection. "And they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." Of the truth of these assertions, there can be no doubt. There was always rejoicing in the church of Rome whenever a new victory was obtained over those who were regarded as heretics. And there was special joy at the close of the Lateran Council, which publicly proclaimed the entire defeat of the witnesses. Splendid dinners were given by the cardinals. "The assembled princes and prelates separated from the council with complacency, confidence and mutual congratulations on the peace, purity and unity of the church." Costly presents were sent to the pope from various parts of his dominions. All this joy was because the persecutors thought that an end had come to the annoyance of the witnesses. The faithful disciples of Christ greatly vexed the church of Rome. They testified against its immoralities; they denounced its corruptions; they threatened it with the judgments of God; their humble and holy lives were a constant rebuke to the pride and wickedness of the Papal communion. It is no wonder, therefore, that men hated the faithful witnesses; that they persecuted them; that they put them to death, and that they rejoiced and made merry over their death, because the two prophets, by their faithful words and their holy lives were ever tormenting those who dwelt on the earth.

3. The next thing which claims our attention is *the resurrection* of the witnesses. "And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them." In order to understand this language, bear in mind who are meant by the witnesses and what is meant by their death. The witnesses are the faithful ones who through successive centuries witnessed for the truth. But they were persecuted by the followers of the



beast; the persecutions against them waxed fiercer and fiercer. In one place after another they were exterminated, until at last none could be found who were willing to acknowledge themselves witnesses for Christ. It is true there were some left, but they were hidden so securely in the fastnesses of the mountains, that the emissaries of Rome could not discover their hiding places, and the Lateran council proclaimed, "No one answers; no one resists." The witnesses seemed to be dead. There was no one to speak openly for the cause of true religion. But by and by, even while the church of Rome was flattering itself on its complete triumph, the line of true witnesses was revived. The Spirit of God entered into them and they began to speak. It was as if they had been raised from the dead. This was fulfilled at the time of the Reformation, when the reformers took up the words which the true witnesses of former centuries had spoken, and uttered them anew in the presence of the world. For the reformers were one with the true witnesses who had preceded them. They taught the same doctrines; they denounced the same corruptions; they testified for the same truths and against the same errors; in one word, they preached the same gospel which the martyrs had preached during the long night of the dark ages. The reformers proclaimed no new doctrines; they but re-echoed the doctrines for which the Waldenses, and Wickliffe, and Huss, and many others had suffered. They were men of the same spirit and character as those who had preceded them. Luther, Calvin, Zwingle and Knox belonged to the same family as the reformers before the Reformation. Their characters had been fashioned in the same mould; they were moved by the same power; they manifested the same fearlessness. It is evident that they belonged to the same line of witnesses. It is hardly a figure of speech to say that the old witnesses had been raised from the dead. The reformers of the sixteenth century bore so close a resemblance to the martyrs who in preceding centuries had sealed their testimony with their blood, in their personal character, in the doctrines which they taught, and in their manner of teaching, that it seems as if the martyrs had been brought from their graves. And as we might expect, great fear fell upon those who saw the revival of true religion. As it was with Herod, who, when he heard of the miracles which Jesus wrought, thought that John the Baptist had risen from the dead, so men in the days of the Reformation were filled with fear at the wonderful events for which they could give no satisfactory account.

This is what is meant by the resurrection of the witnesses. Though, during a short time preceding the Reformation true religion seemed to be extinct and true Christians all seemed to have been put to death, yet when the Reformation dawned, true witnesses of the same line and family as those who had been martyred, sprang to their feet and startled the world by their testimony. It seemed as if the Spirit of life from God had entered into the dead and raised them up to a new life and ministry.

4. The next thing which claims our attention is *the time* which elapsed between their death and resurrection. "After three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them." According to a well established principle in prophetic interpretation, the three days and a half would represent three years and a half. The meaning, then, of this part of the symbol would be, that for a period of three years and a half the line of true witnesses seemed to be extinct, and that at the end of that period, it suddenly and miraculously revived, as suddenly and miraculously as if the martyrs had been raised from the dead. Was there such a period of apparent death, followed by such an awakening? Let us see. We have referred to the Council of Lateran as being the time when the witnesses were defeated and killed. And the particular point in the sessions of the Council of Lateran, when the defeat and murder of the witnesses were consummated, was that day when no heretic appeared to answer for his belief, and when the orator of the council, with the applause of the assembled prelates, proclaimed, "No one answers, no one resists." Then it was that the suppression of witness-bearing for Christ was publicly recognized and announced. We know when this was. The very day has been recorded by historians. It was May 5, 1514. After this date, there is for a time no witness-bearing for Christ. We turn over the pages of history, but the name of a single witness is not to be found; the voice of a single witness is not to be heard. One year passes in silence, so far as the preaching of the true gospel is concerned; another year passes in silence; three years pass in silence; and the fourth year is slipping by, when, on October 31, 1517, just three years and one hundred and eighty days after the proud boast of the Lateran Council, to which we have referred, there is a commotion in Wittenberg, the voice of a witness is heard, which startled the slumberers in the Papal church and astonished the world. That witness is a poor German monk, Martin Luther by name; and he is nailing his memorable theses to the door of his church. The Reformation has now begun. One witness after another makes his appearance, until there is a great cloud of witnesses, all testifying to the same truths for which the martyrs died. It seems as if the Spirit of life from God had entered into the dead; and just three years and one hundred and eighty days after the Roman church had officially proclaimed their extinction, they sprang to their feet, and preached anew the glorious gospel of the Son of God.

5. The next thing which claims our attention is *the triumph* of the witnesses. "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." Of course the events described in this verse are symbols. And of what is the ascent to heaven a symbol? It is a symbol of final victory, of complete triumph. Thus, the ascension of Christ to

heaven is the sign that he had conquered his enemies, and that he had received the approbation of his Heavenly Father for the manner in which he had performed his work. In like manner, the figurative ascent of the witnesses would symbolize their triumph and the favor of God. This part of the symbol would be fulfilled, if the truth proclaimed by these witnesses prevailed, and if the errors against which they testified were overthrown. And this part of the symbol has been fulfilled. The Reformation was a success; the reformers multiplied; the truths of revelation were openly proclaimed; the errors of Rome were exposed; the gospel was preached as the apostles had preached it. The progress of the Reformation was remarkable. It spread from individual to individual, from family to family, from nation to nation, from continent to continent, till all men everywhere beheld the triumphal march of God's witnesses. It was as if they ascended to heaven in a cloud and their enemies beheld them.

V. It now remains to consider THE EFFECT OF THE TRIUMPH OF THE WITNESSES, as described in verse 13. "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." These symbols bear a close resemblance to symbols which have been explained in previous lectures, and therefore it will be easy to discover their meaning. An earthquake is the symbol of a great convulsion or revolution among the nations of the world. That such a convulsion followed the Reformation, no one can question. The structure of the Papal church trembled to its foundation. The nations were convulsed, and thrones shook like aspen leaves. All Europe received a shock from Luther and his fellow laborers in the Reformation.

A second effect of the triumph of the witnesses was the downfall of the tenth part of the city. But what city is here referred to? We turn back to verse 8 of this chapter, and we read that the dead bodies of the witnesses were exposed in the street of the great city, which is spiritually or metaphorically called Sodom and Egypt, and Jerusalem where our Lord was crucified. That city, as has been explained, was the church of Rome, which was distinguished for licentiousness, oppression, and the murder of Christ—the three sins which have made Sodom, Egypt and Jerusalem notorious. This is the city which is here referred to. The tenth part of the church of Rome was to fall before the attacks of the reformers. And history reveals the fact that a very considerable part of the church of Rome did fall before the attacks of the reformers. Many parts of Germany became Protestant. England renounced its allegiance to the pope. It was as if the tenth part of the city fell.

A third effect of the triumph of the witnesses was the death of seven thousand men. The number seven thousand is not to be understood as

referring to a definite number, but to an indefinite and very considerable number. This destruction was to be caused by the earthquake; that is, the moral earthquake of the Reformation. And it is well known that the Reformation was followed by bloody wars. The church of Rome endeavored to crush out by force of arms the growing kingdom of Christ. That endeavor was not crowned with success. Many faithful disciples were slain, but many of their persecutors were slain as well. A great number of adherents to the church of Rome, a number represented by the figurative seven thousand, perished in the wars that followed.

A fourth effect of the triumph of the witnesses was fear and consternation. "The remnant were affrighted." This does not mean that the men here referred to were truly converted, but that they were filled with awe by the marvelous changes which were then taking place, and that in these changes they must have recognized the hand of God. And so it was. In the power, which rent asunder that ecclesiastical establishment which had long held the world in slavery beneath its iron grasp, which inspired kings and peoples with a sense of their manhood, which set free the human mind from the yoke it had worn so long, which planted the principles of civil and religious liberty so firmly that they never again can be uprooted, and which accomplished all this through the instrumentality of a few unknown and feeble men; in the power which had done all this, the inhabitants of the world must have recognized the Divine hand. They were affrighted, and gave the glory to God.

This is the explanation of the sublime vision of the two witnesses, an explanation which triumphantly answers the sneering question, which is so often thrown at the members of the Protestant church, Where was your church before Luther? In the persons of those represented by the two witnesses, the faithful servants of God, who, through all the dark night of Papal supremacy, testified to the truth in sorrow and in poverty; who at last, by the violent persecution of their enemies, were reduced to silence; who, after three years and a half of apparent death, sprang to their feet in the persons of the reformers of the sixteenth century; who triumphed over their foes, and who are yet preaching and living in all love and simplicity the gospel of the Son of God. These are God's witnesses, members of the true church, men of whom the world was not worthy, and who are destined to wear the brightest crowns in the kingdom of heaven.

Do we belong to this family of witnesses? Are we bearing open testimony? In a court of justice it does not matter how much a man may know about the case in hand; if he does not tell what he knows to the court and jury, he is not a witness. It matters not how much we may know of the system of revealed truth, or what we may think of Jesus; if we do not tell openly to the world what we know and think, we are not entitled to the name of God's witnesses. The only way in which we can bear testi-

mony in all ordinary cases is by membership in the church. The church is the witness box in which testimony for Christ must be given. Are we witnesses for God? God help us to be, that we may escape the woes which overhang all others in life, in death, and in eternity.

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## LECTURE XXXII.

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### THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.—Rev. 11: 14-18.

THE announcement of the third woe and the sounding of the seventh trumpet carry the mind back to the previous woes and the previous trumpets. In order to see the exact position which the seventh trumpet occupies in our plan of prophetic interpretation, it may be well to sketch the progress we have already made. The history of the future was made known to the apostle by a succession of visions. We have considered the symbols of these visions in their order, and we have discovered the events which these symbols were designed to shadow forth. The first five seals brought us down to the beginning of the fourth century. The sixth seal carried us down to the close of the fourth century, and revealed the consternation and alarm which filled the Roman empire at the prospect of barbarian invasions. When the seventh seal was opened, seven trumpets were given to seven angels. The first four trumpets symbolized the four great invasions under Alaric, Genseric, Attila and Odoacer, by which the Western empire was destroyed. Before the fifth trumpet sounded, a great voice was heard proclaiming three successive woes upon the inhabitants of the world, by reason of the three trumpets which were yet to sound. The fifth trumpet sounded, and the falling star and the scorpion-locusts which swarmed forth from the bottomless pit symbolized the Mohammedan religion and the victories of the Saracens. This was the first woe. The sixth trumpet sounded, and the loosening of the four angels, who had been bound by the river Euphrates, symbolized the rise and progress of the Turkish empire. This was the second woe.

Under the same trumpet, we saw other visions, which shadowed forth certain events which were to take place during the Turkish empire. The mighty angel descending from heaven with an open book in his hand was a symbol of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. The measuring of the temple and the altar was a symbol of the re-establishment or re-formation of the church, which immediately followed the Reformation. The two witnesses who were defeated and killed, and raised from the dead, were symbols of the few faithful ones who, through the whole period of Papal supremacy, testified for God and for the truth of his gospel, who by the violent persecutions of their enemies were put to silence, and who after three years and a half of apparent death sprang to their feet in the persons of the reformers of the sixteenth century, and startled the world by their testimony. And now "the second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly." What the second woe was, we have seen; what the third woe is to be, we will see when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, and the heavenly voices and the songs of the redeemed are heard announcing that the end has come.

A few remarks of a general nature will help us in understanding the seventh trumpet, and make its explanation easier. There were to be three woes upon the inhabitants of the world, and this is the last. There were to be seven trumpets, and this is the last. These facts would lead us to expect that the end had now come, and that this series of visions was about to close. This expectation is strengthened by what is contained in one of the visions of the preceding chapter. The mighty angel, who stood with one foot upon the sea and the other upon the dry land, swore with uplifted hand, not as it is in our version, "that time should be no longer," but "that the time should not be yet"; that is, the time for which men were then generally looking, even the end of the world; but that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Certainly then, we may expect that when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the mystery of God will be finished, the long looked for time will come, and the world with the present order of things will draw to an end. This expectation is still further strengthened by what is contained in the vision we are now considering. The announcement is made in heaven, that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Surely, this will not be till the present order of things is ended, and a new order of things is begun. It is also announced that the dead are to be judged, that rewards are to be given to the saints, and that others are to be destroyed. Surely, this will not be till the present order of things is ended, and a new order of things is begun.

We are, therefore, able to fix the period covered by the sounding of the seventh trumpet. It extends from the time when the church of Rome will

be broken, and the faithful witnesses will be triumphant in the presence of their foes, till the day of judgment, when the judge upon the great white throne will distribute his rewards and punishments. We are then to look for the fulfillment of the symbols of this trumpet in the closing scenes of the world's history, which are now rapidly approaching their consummation. It is true, these scenes are but briefly sketched in the present vision, for in another series of visions, contained in the subsequent chapters of this book, they are to be described more at length. In that series of visions, the events connected with the end of the world will be minutely detailed, and when we come to explain that series of visions, these events will be carefully discussed. We will follow the example of the Spirit of inspiration, and touch but briefly on the incidents which are here referred to.

Let it then be remembered that the sounding of the seventh trumpet is the last vision in the present series, the vision which brings the present series to a close. We have, from the beginning of chapter IV, been following the wonderful panorama of the future. We have seen the prominent events of history, especially those connected with the church, shadowed forth under expressive symbols. We have witnessed the persecutions, and conflicts, and triumphs of the saints, as described in symbolic language. And now the seventh angel sounds the trumpet which had been given to him, and there are wonders in heaven which indicate that the end of the world has come, and that the day has dawned to which all the dwellers on the earth have long looked forward with many a misgiving.

The scene of this vision is the celestial plain. The voices which the apostle heard and the sights which he saw were in heaven. The earth has vanished from his view. The consummation of all things has come. In vision, John saw the day which the prophets had foretold, and for which the saints, in every age, have waited; that day which is yet future, and for which we are waiting. And he tells us what he saw. While we study his words and endeavor to understand their meaning, let us remember that they describe a day which we will see, and a scene in which we will be deeply interested. The apostle's vision divides itself into two parts, viz., the heavenly voices, and the worship of the redeemed.

I. Let us notice **THE HEAVENLY VOICES**. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." The apostle does not tell us by whom these words were uttered; but certainly we cannot be wrong if we suppose them to be the words of the great multitude which had assembled on the celestial plain. The holy angels had long looked for the coming of this day. They had watched from the beginning of time the development of God's plan, and wondered more and more at each new revelation of divine

grace. There were many things which they were not able to understand, for God's ways were far above their comprehension, but they waited patiently with full angelic trust. Now when the end had come and they saw clearly how God had made all things to work together for his glory, it is no wonder that they sang together as they had done on the morning of creation, and shouted with a greater joy than they had felt when they beheld the wonders of creating omnipotence. But voices were heard now, which were not heard when the morning stars sang together, and when the sons of God shouted for joy. These were the voices of the saints. This day was the fulfillment of their hopes. During their earthly lives, they had been looking forward to this day. They looked forward to it in their dying hour. Now, when that day had come, a day free from sin, and sorrow, and death, and full of rewards and victories, they joined their voices with the voices of the sinless angels in making the plains of heaven ring with the praises of their God. For the voices which were heard were the voices of praise and exultation. And they were great voices. The voice of praise here on earth is feeble, and it is often interrupted by weariness and by cries of agony; but the praise of that day will be uninterrupted and unbroken.

The first announcement made by the heavenly voices was, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ"; or, as this clause reads in the critical editions of the New Testament, "the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ." However, the meaning is substantially the same, whichever reading is adopted. There is a sense in which the world and the fullness thereof ever have been the kingdom of God. He created it for his own glory; it belongs to him; and he has never laid down the reins of its government. But many parts of the world have, since the beginning, been in rebellion against him. Individuals and nations have not recognized his authority; they have not obeyed his law. There has not been a time since the gates of Eden closed on the retreating forms of our first parents, when all men and all kingdoms have bowed themselves in humble submission before the throne of their Creator. And as it has been in the past, so it is in the present. Earth's dark places are yet filled with the habitations of horrid cruelty. There is many a heart, and many a home, and many a palace, which acknowledges no allegiance to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And so it will continue to be until the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet; then the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. Then God will be recognized as the Supreme Ruler, and his word will be obeyed as a higher law than any constitution which human wisdom has framed. Then nations will learn war no more, and the instruments of warfare will be turned into the implements of peace, for all will wear the same uniform and march beneath the



same Great Captain of their salvation. Then no man will need to teach his brother the way to Zion, for all will be traveling thither. But it is to be observed that the kingdom of this world is not only to become the kingdom of God, but also "of his Christ." That is, the kingdom of this world is not only to become the kingdom of the Godhead; it is in a special manner to become the kingdom of the second person of the Godhead. This is a truth which is taught with great plainness in the Holy Scriptures. It is of the second person of the Trinity it is said, "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." It is the second person of the Trinity who "upholdeth all things by the word of his power." It is the second person of the Trinity whom God has made "head over all things for his church." And it is to the second person of the Trinity to whom the kingdoms of this world are at last to give in their allegiance.

The heavenly voices announce not only that the universal kingdom of Christ had begun, but also that it should never end. "He shall reign for ever and ever." This, too, is in accordance with repeated declarations of Scripture. "His throne is an everlasting throne." "His kingdom hath no end." The heavenly voices, then, announce no new truth; they only repeat truths with which every reader of the Bible is familiar, even the truths that Christ is Lord of all and that his kingdom is to be universal and everlasting. When these predictions begin to be fulfilled, what a change will be wrought in this world of ours, which sin has so long defiled and subdued! According to inspiration, the time is to come when the Saviour is to reign in the earth, when all men everywhere will recognise his authority and obey his laws, when from every city, and hamlet, and home, and heart, the words of loving adoration will be heard ever more. This time will be when the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet and the heavenly voices will be heard saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

II. We were to notice THE WORSHIP OF THE REDEEMED, as it is described in verses 16-18.

1. In the first place, we will have to notice *the persons* by whom this worship was offered. It was offered by "the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats." When these elders were first introduced, in chapter IV, into this series of visions, their symbolical character was explained and the persons they symbolized were pointed out. The arguments which were then advanced need not now be repeated. It will be sufficient to state the conclusion which was then reached, viz., that the four and twenty elders symbolize and represent the church triumphant, the redeemed in heaven. And when the seventh angel has sounded his trum-

pet, and the Saviour takes to himself his great power, the redeemed in heaven, who have long been waiting for the coming of this time, unite in singing a song of thanksgiving, in which, for some reason we are not able to discover, the four living creatures who are the representatives of the church on the earth are not permitted to join.

2. The next thing which claims our attention is *the attitude* of the worshipers. "They fell upon their faces and worshiped God." There was no formal worship. They were full of adoration and love; and they manifested their adoration and love by prostrating themselves before the throne.

3. The next thing which claims our attention is *the song* of thanksgiving which the four and twenty elders sang, for it is evident that the worship of the redeemed on this occasion was not made up of confession and petition, but of thanksgiving. This song is contained in verses 17 and 18, and it will be best explained by considering its several parts one by one. In the first place, they worshiped God and gave him thanks, as "the Lord God Almighty"; that is, as the all powerful God. It was by the omnipotence of his arm that the work had been accomplished, whose completion was now celebrated. Nothing but omnipotence could have defended the church through all its trials, and established it over all the world in spite of the opposition of wicked men and angels. Therefore, these worshipers first of all mention the divine omnipotence in their song of thanksgiving, saying, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty."

In the next place, they worship God and give him thanks, as the God "which art, and wast, and art to come"; that is, as the eternal and unchanging one. It is worthy of remark that the last phrase, "art to come," is omitted by nearly all the recent editors of this book as being without sufficient authority. This phrase is to be found in similar passages elsewhere, as for example, in chapter I:8. And it is supposed that some transcriber inserted it in this verse, thinking that some previous copyist had by mistake omitted it. But it has no place here. This passage refers to the end of time, and while it would be proper to say that God was, and God is, it would not be proper to say that God is to be, for then time would be no longer, and eternity would be an eternal now. The unchangeableness of God must ever be a theme of thanksgiving. The reason why the church and the members of the church are always safe, is because God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The redeemed in heaven know this truth, even better than the redeemed on the earth, and they make mention of it in their song of praise.

And now there follows an enumeration of the things for which the redeemed in heaven give thanks to the Lord God Almighty, who then was and ever had been the same. They praise him because, to use their own language, "Thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned."

It had seemed to the saints, at times, as if the Saviour had abdicated his universal throne, or had, at least, relaxed his government over the world. Sin, anarchy and rebellion prevailed. But he had now shown his divine power; he had subdued his enemies; he had established his kingdom; he had shown himself a king. This called forth the praise of those who had long wondered at the prosperity of the wicked and their oppression of the church. The next theme of thanksgiving is the manifestation of the divine wrath. "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come." The nations had long shown their anger against the church and the church's King and Head. They had opposed the truth; they had persecuted the witnesses; they had slain the saints; they had laid waste the church. But now the divine patience was exhausted and the divine wrath was kindled. Let those who are the enemies of the great King tremble, and let those who are his friends rejoice with exceeding joy; for the awakening of the divine wrath is an occasion of thanksgiving to those who are redeemed. Such an occasion of thanksgiving is to be, if the Scriptures are to be relied on, when the world is drawing to an end. The final establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth will be preceded and accompanied by such calamities as will show that the king has arisen in his might to cut off his foes and vindicate his people. The next theme of thanksgiving is the coming of the day of judgment. "The time of the dead is come that they should be judged." Many will not be able to see in the near approach of the day of judgment any reason for joy. They will cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them and cover them from the Lamb, when the great day of his wrath has come. But it will not be so with the saints. To them the day of judgment is the day of complete vindication and overflowing joy. For then, in the language of these heavenly worshipers, "Thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great." When that day shall come, the people of God, whatever be the name by which they were known on the earth, or whatever be the station which they occupied, will receive their reward. And what a reward it will be! It may not be described. It cannot be conceived. The inspired word hints at thrones, and crowns, and pleasures, and fullness of joys, and life everlasting; but these things are too strange for us to understand. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Do not fail to see and feel the comfort which the words we are now considering are well calculated to impart. We dare not claim for ourselves the name of prophets; we may not, when we remember our sinfulness, dare to claim for ourselves the name of saints; but we may claim for ourselves the name of those who fear the Lord. If so, however low we may be in the esteem of men, we may look up and expect the reward; for the song of the heavenly worshipers assures us that the judge will reward not only his servants the prophets, not only the saints, but also them "that fear his name, both small

and great." For these words let us be thankful. There is a reward for them that fear the Lord. The last theme of thanksgiving is the destruction of the church's enemies. "And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Then the long reign of Satan will be ended, and his followers, who have made our world a battle field and a sepulcher, will be destroyed.

This is the conclusion of the first series of visions, for verse 19 of this chapter belongs rather to the next chapter, and marks the beginning of a new series of visions. We have now traced the history of the world through successive symbols, from the time when John was an exile in Patmos to the day of judgment. Where are we and the church standing to-day? If we have been correct in our exposition, this question is not difficult to answer. We are near the close of the period marked by the sounding of the sixth trumpet, and near the beginning of the period marked by the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, a period insisted on not only in this book, but also in the prophecy of Daniel, covers the time of Papal supremacy. If we knew the exact date when the church of Rome began to be supreme, we would know the exact date of its overthrow. But the former date is not easy to fix. We know that it was about the seventh century. If, for example, it was in the year 600, then one thousand two hundred and sixty years would bring us down to the latter half of the present century. And as we have within these recent years seen the Pope stripped of his temporal power, and the mighty ecclesiastical system of which he is the head lying like a helpless wreck in the very path of human progress, we may well believe that the echoes of the sixth trumpet will soon die away, and that the seventh trumpet will soon begin to sound. How long a period of time is covered by the seventh trumpet, no man can tell. The events occurring under it, which have been so briefly sketched in the present lecture, are described at greater length in some of the subsequent chapters; and in future lectures we will have occasion to speak of them more particularly. But standing, as we do to-day, almost on the dividing line which separates the sixth trumpet from the seventh, we know that the time will soon come, if it has not already come, when the heavenly voices will begin to say, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ," and when the redeemed will begin their song of final triumph, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned."

## LECTURE XXXIII.

## THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.—REV. 11: 19; 12: 1, 2.

IT was intimated in the last lecture that the seventh trumpet closed one series of visions, and that the subject of the present discourse begins a new series. In that series, we traced the prominent events in the history of the church and the world, from the time of the apostle's exile in Patmos to the day of judgment; but this series does not continue the history and describe what is to be after the judgment. It is retrospective. It turns back and gives a more detailed account of some things which have already been noticed. In other words, the visions upon whose consideration we now enter refer to events before the judgment, and not to events after the judgment, as their place in this book might seem, at first sight, to imply. This series of visions is parallel, to a certain extent, with the one which has been engaging our attention.

That this theory is correct is evident from two considerations. In the first place, the period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, which was insisted on in the previous visions, is insisted on in the visions which are to follow. And the events, occurring during this period in both series of visions, bear a very close resemblance to each other. It is far more natural to suppose that the two series of visions refer to the same period, than to two successive periods of equal length. In the second place, the seventh trumpet brought us without question to the time when the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and when the Judge would give rewards to his servants on the day of judgment; but many of the incidents described in the following chapters, such as the dominion of Satan, the persecution of the saints, the downfall of mystical Babylon and the plagues poured out upon the world, could not by any possibility occur after the day of judgment. The majority of expositors, feeling the force of these reasons, agree in the conclusion that this new series of visions is retrospective, and that it is, to a certain extent, parallel with the former series in which we saw the seals broken and heard the trumpets sounded.

But though the two series of visions are parallel, they are diverse. The former series described what may be called the external history of the church; that is, the history of the church as related to the kingdoms of

the world, especially the great Roman empire; the latter describes what may be called the internal history of the church. In the former, we saw the prosperity and calamities of the Roman world, the barbarian invasions by which the western kingdom was destroyed, the victories of the Saracens, the rise and progress of the Turkish empire, and the influence of all these things upon the church; in the latter, we are to see the church in its growth, in its internal conflicts, and in its perils from more spiritual foes. It may therefore be said, for the sake of clearness, that the former series of visions contains the history of the world, and that the latter contains the history of the church; though the statement must be understood in a modified sense, because the history of the church and the history of the world are so intimately connected that they cannot always be kept separate.

This arrangement in parallel narratives is not by any means uncommon. Many histories, with which we are acquainted, first give an account of political events, and then turn back and go over the same period, giving an account of ecclesiastical events. In the same way the Spirit of inspiration has arranged the Apocalypse. In the first place, in those chapters we have already considered, we have the external history of the church; in the second place, in those chapters we are yet to consider, we have the internal history of the church. Let it then be remembered, that with the present lecture we enter upon a new series of visions, which is parallel with the former series and which has to do for the most part with the internal history of the church.

The scene of these visions is the same as that of the preceding ones. It is the celestial plain. The introduction to these visions, which is contained in chapter XI: 19, reminds us of the introduction to the preceding ones, which is contained in chapter IV. Then the apostle saw the heavens opened, and the first voice which he heard was a voice saying unto him, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." Now the apostle saw the heavenly temple opened, and he was permitted to see, not the outer court alone, but also the innermost shrine where the ark of the covenant rested. And the things seen on these two occasions indicate very clearly that there was to be a difference in the visions which they introduced. Then he saw a great white throne encircled by the rainbow and surrounded by God's servants and messengers. This would indicate that he was about to see the works of the King of kings, as from his throne in the heavens he ruled the universe for his glory. Now he saw the heavenly temple and its most sacred furniture. To this heavenly temple our attention has already been called, for the scenery of the celestial landscape remains substantially the same in both series of visions, though those parts of which little has been said hitherto, are now to be the centre of attraction. The heavenly temple stood not far from the throne on that plain which resembled a crystal sea. It was in all respects similar to the

temple in Jerusalem, in which the Jews were accustomed to worship, and with whose plan every Jew was familiar. It had its outer court, which in the previous visions we saw trodden under foot by the enemies of God for forty and two months. It had its inner court, whose worshipers in the previous visions John was commanded to number and whose altar he was commanded to measure. It had its most holy place, whose vail was now withdrawn so that the apostle was permitted to see the ark of the covenant. The earthly temple is spoken of in the Scriptures as a symbol of the church. The church is described as a glorious temple, whose corner stone is Christ Jesus the Lord, whose foundations are the apostles and prophets, and whose walls are builded of the saints as living stones, fitly framed together. So the heavenly temple is a symbol of the church. We have so regarded it in former visions, and we must so regard it here. The fact that this temple was now opened, so that John could see into its inmost recesses, even to the ark of the testimony, symbolizes the fact that those visions which were about to pass before his eyes were to reveal the internal history of the church.

In this introductory vision, there was not only an open temple, but also "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." These natural phenomena are well known symbols of wars, and revolutions, and dire calamities of every kind. Their appearance in this introductory vision would indicate that in the internal history of the church which was to be revealed, there would be calamities, great and sore, such calamities as would be seen of men if lightnings, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and a great hail would simultaneously visit the earth.

This is the significance of this introductory vision. It is one well calculated to prepare the mind for what is to follow. Let us get it firmly fixed in our memory. As in the former introductory vision, the sight of the throne and the powerful ones gathered around it would lead the apostle to expect an insight into the Divine government over the world, so in the present introductory vision, the sight of the interior of the temple would lead the apostle to expect an insight into the history of the church; and the accompanying thunderings and earthquake would lead him to expect that the history of the church would be one of trouble and calamity. It was as if this introductory vision said to him in language too plain for him to misunderstand: "You are now to see the internal history of the church, which will be smitten by lightnings, and alarmed by thunders, and shaken by earthquakes. Prepare yourself for what you are about to see." May this introductory vision prepare us, as it prepared the apostle, for the remarkable scenes which are, one after another, to pass in review before us.

The first of these scenes, one whose grandeur and beauty is not surpassed by any which has gone before, or by any which is to follow, is the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, and the great red dragon. The prominent

features of this vision may be thus described: A beautiful woman, who is about to become a mother, clothed with more magnificent raiment than the queens of the East were accustomed to wear, and with a diadem of stars, appears on the heavenly plain. But her enemy, in the shape of a seven-headed dragon, also appears and threatens her destruction. Her child is removed from the reach of danger; she herself is hidden in the wilderness; the dragon is disappointed in his prey; and shouts of victory are heard. This is the vision. What does it mean? What did the Spirit intend to represent by it? What is symbolized by the woman? What by the dragon? To the answers to these questions, we now address ourselves; and in so doing it will be necessary to consider all the details of the vision.

We must first notice the woman who is the central figure of this vision, and inquire of what she is the symbol. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." Without any question, this woman is a symbol. Our version reads, "There appeared a great wonder in heaven"; but the word translated "wonder" is more correctly translated in the margin, "sign." This is the way in which the word is usually translated, and if the usual translation had been followed in the present instance, the reader would not have been so likely to be misled. The woman is introduced upon the scene, not as a thing to be wondered at, but as a sign or symbol. But as a symbol of what? Is the symbol so obscure that we are left in doubt? Let us see. John was a Jew and he was familiar with the Jewish Scriptures. We know that he belonged to a pious family, and like the children of every pious Jewish family, he must have been made acquainted with the law and the prophets. Is there anything in the Old Testament Scriptures which will throw light upon this symbolic representation? We turn to the Song of Solomon, that book of the Bible which the church is not now spiritual enough fully to understand and appreciate, and we find that the church is described under the figure of a beautiful woman, who is the bride of the Great King. We turn to the Psalms, and find the same figure in Psalm 45, which describes the church as being brought home to the palace of her divine husband, with songs of joy on every side. We turn to the prophets, and we find the same figure often introduced to describe the love of God and the duty of the church. "Thy Maker is thy husband." "I have espoused thee to myself." In other passages, especially in the prophecies of Ezekiel and Hosea, an unfaithful church is described as an unfaithful wife, and her unfaithfulness is described as adultery. These descriptions are better calculated than almost any others contained in the inspired word to impress us with the unworthiness, and ingratitude, and vileness of the professed people of God, when they turn away from him to follow after idols. The



figure is repeated so often, that no reader of the Old Testament can be in doubt as to what is meant by the daughter of Zion, whom the Lord has espoused to himself. As John was familiar with the Old Testament, we may be sure that in this woman who appeared in heaven, he recognized the church. It is a figure which is to be found again and again in the course of these visions. "And I, John, saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready." "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." In view of these passages, there can be no doubt as to the meaning of this part of the vision. Other parts of the vision may be encompassed with difficulties, but this much is plain; the woman is the symbol of the church. And the symbol is an appropriate one. The Saviour is the husband of the church. The church is the bride of the Saviour. This figure reveals, in a way which we can in some measure understand, the greatness of the Saviour's love, the high honor to which the church is called, and the intimate union which exists between the two for ever.

The next thing which claims our attention is the appearance of this woman. She was "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." The sun, moon and stars are generally used in this book as symbols of kings, and princes, and governments. If they are used in this sense in the present instance, then the meaning would be that the church at the time referred to was surrounded and defended by kings, and princes, and governments; that the church had received the support of the civil power. We know that there have been periods in the history of the church when this was the case. For example, in the days of Constantine, the Christian religion was the established religion of the empire, and the emperor and his subordinates were, by profession at least, servants of the church, and all the power of the civil authority was used to extend the earthly kingdom of the Saviour. Such a state of things would be described in figurative language by the words we are now considering. Principalities and powers, symbolized by the sun, moon and stars, adorned the church and heightened its beauty and majesty. But while all this is true, it does not seem necessary to a fair understanding of this vision to regard the sun, moon and stars in the present instance as symbols of earthly rulers. It seems more in accordance with the spirit of this vision to regard them as accessories to the central figure of the vision; that is, as symbols of beauty and majesty. The woman was clothed with the sun; that is, her robes were bright and glorious, as if her raiment was woven of sunbeams. A similar thought is to be found in the bridegroom's description of his bride, as contained in the Song of Solomon; "who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army

with banners." The woman had also the moon under her feet. She rode through the heavens in calm and silent majesty, as if the moon was her chariot. She had on her head a crown of twelve stars. Such a diadem, with twelve sparkling jewels, would of course increase the beauty of the vision. And without doubt, the number twelve is significant. It looks back to the original division of the earthly church into the twelve tribes of Israel, just as the stripes in our national flag point to the thirteen original States in the Union. Besides this, twelve is the symbolic number which represents completion; and therefore the twelve stars in the woman's crown would teach us that she represents not a part or denomination of the church, but the complete church.

The circumstances mentioned in verse 2 indicate that the church seemed about to be enlarged. The members of the church are often described as its sons and daughters. The church's increase is often described in the Scriptures as the multiplication of her children. Many passages might be quoted in proof of this assertion, but a single one will be sufficient for my present purpose. "The children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, the place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell." The comparison of the church with a mother with her children is one which no reader of the Bible is likely to misunderstand.

Let us now get clearly fixed in our minds the things which this symbol is designed to teach. We are, in this crowned and beautiful woman, to see the church. And we are to see the church at some period of its history when it was enjoying prosperity. If it was in tribulation and persecution, it would be more properly represented by a woman who was in distress, who was a fugitive, whose crown was dimmed and whose robes were in disorder. And before the vision ends, we will see the church thus represented. But now, at the beginning of the vision, it is in the enjoyment of prosperity. Her robes of sunlight are without a stain; she goes forth on her mission with the calm majesty of the midnight moon; and her crown of sparkling stars is undimmed. Appearances seem to indicate that the church is to be increased, that her children are to be multiplied. But as we shall see in another lecture, though the fact must be briefly referred to here in order to understand this part of the vision, this period of prosperity was to be followed by a period of persecution. A great enemy would come against her, ready to devour her and her child. She would be driven into the wilderness. Her offspring would be snatched from the earth. The confident expectation of the church's increase would be disappointed, and for one thousand two hundred and sixty years she would live on alone without giving birth to sons and daughters who would fill the world with their presence, and rule the nations with a rod of iron.

These are the things which the expressive symbols of the vision would

lead us to expect. Are there such things to be found in the history of the church? We can, without hesitation, answer these questions in the affirmative. We will not, in this connection, enter into any detail. Details will be more properly considered hereafter. Nor will I quote at large from the recorded history of the church. Our general knowledge of ecclesiastical history will be sufficient for my present purpose. For a time during and after the apostolic age, the church enjoyed wonderful prosperity. It is true, there were sore persecutions, but these persecutions, under the divine blessing, were the very means by which Christianity was promoted. The disciples were scattered far and near, and in their journeying through the world they carried with them the word of God and the invitations of the gospel. Churches sprung up in every prominent city; the voice of praise and prayer was heard in the most unlikely places; saints were to be found even in Caesar's household; the temples of the pagan gods began to be deserted; and at last a Christian sat upon the imperial throne and exerted all his immense power and influence to evangelize the world. To a spectator, who was not acquainted with the plans of an all-wise Father, it must have seemed that in a few years, or at most in a century or two, the church would so increase that her sons and daughters would fill the world. But such expectations are not to be fulfilled. A great enemy appears, an enemy symbolized in this vision by the red dragon; the period of prosperity comes to an end; the true church is driven into obscurity; year after year, and century after century, even all the years and centuries which are described in history as the dark ages, pass away; and the church makes no advancement towards its final triumph. It does not grow or increase; it gives birth to no expected offspring; it remains the same from age to age, barely holding its own against prevailing wickedness. The same thought is expressed in the vision of the two witnesses. They were but two in number when the vision began; they were but two in number when it ended; they remained but two in number during the whole period of their witness-bearing. Thus the vision of the two witnesses and the vision of the woman in the wilderness point to the same period in the history of the church, when the true church was barely able to maintain its existence, so great was the power of its foes. But in the verses discussed in the present lecture, we see the church before the beginning of this period, while it was yet enjoying its great prosperity, when it was clothed with the sun, when it had the moon under its feet, when it was crowned with a diadem of sparkling stars, and when it gave promise, that through its children who were about to be born, it would fill the whole earth. The enemy whose power brought this period of prosperity to a close, the long and weary persecutions of the church, and its final deliverance, must be considered in another lecture.

## LECTURE XXXIV.

## THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.—REV. 12: 8-6.

IN the last lecture we have shown that we have now entered upon a new series of visions which is parallel, to a certain extent, with the one contained in the preceding chapters of this book. In that lecture we took up the first vision of this new series, and we showed that the woman who appeared in the vision was a symbol of the church during a period of prosperity. It was also shown that this was the condition of the church during the centuries which immediately followed the time of the apostles. When we look at the church during these centuries—as symbolized by a crowned and beautiful woman—its purity, its progress, and its growing power, we are ready to believe that the time has come when the church is to fill the earth, and we are ready to begin the song of final victory, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ.” But these glowing expectations are doomed to disappointment. There is a dark side to this picture which we have not yet seen. The woman is not the only symbol which appears on the celestial plain. There is a second, which differs from the first as widely as light differs from darkness. This second symbol is the great red dragon. To the description of this symbol, and to the discovery, if possible, of the power symbolized by it, let us now turn our attention.

I. It is hardly necessary to say that no such beast as A DRAGON is to be found in nature. It is one of those fabulous monsters, like the Hydra and the Centaur, which the ancients so often imagined, and to which ancient literature so often refers. In those days, when the knowledge of natural history was limited, it was believed that there were many such hideous monsters living in those parts of the earth which men had rarely or never visited. Such a hideous monster of the imagination was the dragon. The contemporaries of the inspired writers of the Bible believed in its existence, as they believed in the existence of the lion and the camel. It is sometimes referred to in the Old Testament, as one of the things of which men might well be afraid. Thus the Psalmist, in Psalm 74, when describing the

power of the Almighty, mentions this as one of the works which none but God could perform: "Thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters." Thus the Psalmist, in Psalm 91, when describing the safety of the righteous, mentions this as among his privileges: "The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot." In the New Testament the dragon is referred to only in the visions of the Apocalypse, and then only as a symbol; and it is always referred to as the symbol of some great power.

In order to understand the symbol and its meaning, we must bear in mind the characteristics which were generally ascribed to this fabulous monster by popular belief. These characteristics can easily be ascertained from the allusions and descriptions which are to be found in ancient writings. According to the common belief of antiquity, the dragon was an immense serpent of a dark red color; it had a wide mouth which enclosed three rows of gigantic fangs; its inhalations were so strong that the very birds flying over it were drawn into its mouth by its breath; and its hiss was terrible. It is also sometimes described as having feet and wings, and a lofty and bloody crest. Such was the fabulous monster which John saw in heaven; and its characteristics, as it appeared on the celestial plain, agree with the description which has just been given. The dragon of the vision was of great size; its color was red; like many others of the fabulous monsters of antiquity, it was many-headed. As Cerberus, who guarded the gates of the unseen world had three heads—as Hydra, which was slain by Hercules had fifty heads, so this dragon is represented as having seven heads. Upon these heads were ten horns, and they were crowned with seven crowns. Its immense tail seemed to be entangled with the stars of heaven, so that one-third of them were blotted out and apparently cast down to the earth. It stood before the woman, ready with open mouth to destroy her child as soon as it was born. How vivid is this description! Let us create in our imagination such a monster as the ancients created and called by the name of the dragon. We may let our imagination take its wildest flight, for there is no danger of overdrawing the picture. If we can succeed in this, we will see the vision as it appeared to the apostle. On the one hand is the beautiful woman, with her magnificent raiment, majestic carriage, and sparkling crown. On the other hand is the great red dragon, "of most frightful mien," with its heads and its horns, full of wrath against the woman and her child.

All the characteristics of this dragon, as it appeared in heaven, are symbolical. Without any reference to any preconceived theory of interpretation, let us inquire what these characteristics would lead us to expect in the thing symbolized. If we have rightly explained the beast ascending out of the bottomless pit, and the horses of the previous visions, we would naturally expect that the dragon would shadow forth some earthly nation or power. The size of the dragon, which was great, would lead us to expect that this

power would be mighty. The color of the dragon, which was red, would lead us to expect that this power would be cruel and bloody. The seven heads and ten horns would lead us to expect that this power would be a king or a kingdom; for a crown is always and everywhere a symbol of royal authority. Its open and marked hostility to the woman would lead us to expect that this power would be the bitter enemy of the true church, of which the woman was the symbol. The casting down and blotting out of the third part of the stars of heaven would lead us to expect that this power would be so successful in its enmity that a very considerable part of the human race would be entangled by its influence and overthrown by its might. This is the symbol; and these are the things which the symbol would naturally lead us to expect. Are these expectations to be realized? Can we find events in history which fully meet the requirements of this vision?

Is there anything in the Old Testament which will help us in answering these questions? If we turn to the seventh chapter of Daniel, we will, without hesitation, answer in the affirmative. The prophet saw, in vision, four beasts rising out of the sea. The first was like a lion; the second was like a bear; the third was like a leopard; the fourth was diverse from the others, and though no name is given to it, its description corresponds very nearly with John's description of the dragon, so nearly that we may be sure that the two symbols are the same, and that they both shadow forth the same power. The prophet could not understand the meaning of the beasts which he saw; and when he asked for an interpretation the angel replied: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth." Still the prophet was not satisfied. He asked to be further instructed as to the meaning of the fourth dreadful beast, with its iron teeth, its brazen nails, its ten horns, and with its little horn, which came up after the others, speaking blasphemous things and making war with the saints. To his question the angel answered: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time." Dan. 7: 23-25.

What kingdoms were symbolized by these beasts, especially by the fourth beast, which corresponds with the dragon of the Revelation? The explanation of the angel is so plain that expositors, at least Protestant expositors, are almost unanimous in their interpretation. The first beast is the

symbol of the Chaldean kingdom, which was at the time of Daniel's vision the mistress of the world. The second beast is the symbol of the Persian kingdom, which overthrew and succeeded the Chaldean. The third beast is the symbol of the Grecian kingdom, which overthrew and succeeded the Persian. The fourth beast is the symbol of the Roman kingdom, which overthrew and succeeded the Grecian. The little horn which grew up out of the head of the fourth beast is the symbol of the Papal power, which grew up out of the midst of the Roman empire, from its very capital, speaking blasphemous things and making war against the saints.

There is such a resemblance between the fourth beast of Daniel's vision and the dragon of John's vision, that the apostle, who was familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, must have regarded them as symbolizing the same power. And no one can read attentively the two visions without being forced to the same conclusion. Whatever the fourth beast and the dragon symbolize, they must both symbolize the same kingdom, even the kingdom which the angel described as the fourth kingdom on the earth. If the theory is correct that the fourth beast with its horns symbolizes the Roman kingdom, both pagan and Papal, then we have a key which unlocks the vision we are now considering. The dragon is the symbol of the Roman power, first under pagan emperors, and afterwards under popes.

This exposition is confirmed by the conclusion which we reached in our last lecture. The crowned and beautiful woman was the symbol of the church during the years which followed the apostolic age, when it was in a prosperous condition, and when it gave promise of a speedy and rapid increase which would fill the whole world. But an enemy appeared, who successfully resisted the progress of Christianity, and who drove the church into obscurity. Who was this enemy? Who could it be but the Roman power, which, first under pagan emperors and afterwards under popes, showed itself the great foe of true religion, and which so long and successfully persecuted the followers of Jesus?

But let us see whether the things which the characteristics of the dragon naturally led us to expect are to be found in the Roman power. If they are not, then our theory cannot be true; if they are, then we are confirmed in our belief that the dragon is the symbol of the Roman power. The Roman power was mighty. Under the emperors it extended over the world. The mightiest kingdoms, and the richest cities, and the poorest and weakest tribes of the most distant lands were alike the vassals of Rome. And the power of the popes was even greater than that of the emperors. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the dragon was great. Again: the Roman power was cruel and bloody. Under the emperors, the church suffered the most violent persecutions; and under the popes, hundreds of

thousands of saints were compelled to seal their testimony with their blood. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the dragon was red in color. Again: the dragon had seven heads. What is there in the Roman power, of which this is the symbol? We might not have been able to answer this question, if in a parallel vision an angel had not given an explanation so clear that it cannot be misunderstood. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Rev. 17:9. It may therefore be said, without the shadow of a doubt, that the seven heads of the dragon are the seven mountains on which the Roman power sat. Rome, the capital of the Roman power and the centre from which both emperors and popes ruled the world, was, as is well known, builded upon seven hills. And Rome is, not in theological writings alone, but also in classical literature, called "the seven-hilled city." Again: the dragon had ten horns. Of what are they the symbols? "The ten horns," says the angel in his explanation of Daniel's parallel vision, "are ten kings that shall arise." It is well known that the Roman empire was divided and broken up into a number of provinces or subordinate kingdoms, each one of which had its king or ruler; but all these kings or rulers were subject to the central government at Rome. And it is easy to see that the principal sub-divisions in the Roman empire were ten in number. Thus Machiavelli, in his *History of Florence*, without any design of explaining this vision, and without any reference to it, mentions the following divisions: 1. The Ostrogoths; 2. The Visigoths; 3. The Sueves and Alans; 4. The Vandals; 5. The Franks; 6. The Burgundians; 7. The Heruli and Turingi; 8. The Saxons and Angles; 9. The Huns; 10. The Lombards. At other periods of Roman history, the dividing lines were differently drawn, but it is always easy to find ten principal sub-divisions. These sub-divisions, subordinate to and united in the central government at Rome, are shadowed forth by the ten horns, growing out of the heads of the same dragon. Again: the dragon had seven crowns upon his heads. This shadows forth the fact that the Roman power claimed supreme authority, a fact which history establishes beyond the possibility of a doubt. Both emperors and popes claimed to be supreme on the earth, and to wear the crown of the world. Again: the Roman power exerted a mighty influence over the world and the church. In its persecution of the church, both under the emperors and under the popes, it blotted out many who were bright and shining lights. We know that in this book the stars are used as symbols of ministers of the gospel; for he that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for ever more, tells us in the opening chapter, that "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." And the Roman power put many of the ministers of the gospel to death. Though the history of those ages is not full enough to show us that precisely one-third of the ministers of the gospel was put to death for the sake of the gospel, yet we know that a very large proportion of



them suffered a martyr's death and are wearing a martyr's crown. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the tail of the dragon drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them down to the earth. Again: the Roman power was the deadly foe of the true church. Both emperors and popes did their best to crush out the truth and believers in the truth, and they were so far successful that the expectations of the church's increase were disappointed, and for many centuries the true church was barely able to maintain its existence, without making a single step towards its final triumph and universal dominion. All this is shadowed forth by the fact, that "the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

From this brief review, it will be seen that all the characteristics of the great red dragon are adequately and strikingly fulfilled in the Roman power. We are therefore brought to the conclusion that the great red dragon is a symbol of the Roman power. This conclusion receives confirmation from a fact which deserves mention. In the days of the republic, the eagle was the standard under which the Roman armies marched forth to victory; but at a later period, the dragon, in the form of a great purple serpent, was also used as a standard. In the third century of the Christian era, it had become as notorious among the Roman ensigns as the eagle itself. There is, therefore, a peculiar propriety in considering the dragon as a symbol of that kingdom, whose well known standard was a dragon.

I know that in a subsequent verse of this chapter, the dragon is said to be "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." But this does not contradict the explanation which has been given. We cannot suppose that the dragon represents Satan in his own proper form and character, for then it would be no symbol. It represents some satanic power, some instrument used by Satan, for the overthrow of the church. That instrument I believe to be, and I think I have shown it to be, anti-Christian, persecuting Rome, both under the government of the emperors and under the government of the popes.

We have now fixed the meaning of the two main symbols in the present vision. The crowned and beautiful woman is a symbol of the true church; the great red dragon is a symbol of pagan and Papal Rome, the great enemy of the true church. However humiliating and distasteful this interpretation must be to the pride of the Roman Catholic church, it is builded on a firm foundation. All the several parts of this vision, the parallel vision in the book of Daniel, as explained by the angel himself, and the facts of history, all unite in proving that the great red dragon is the symbol of Rome. Bearing this in mind, we will have little difficulty in understanding the rest of the vision.

II. We have now to notice **THE CHURCH'S DELIVERANCE** from impending danger, and its escape into the wilderness, as described in verses 5 and 6. "And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." The first thing that claims our attention here is the fact that the woman's child, as soon as he was born, was snatched away from her, and she was left alone. You will please bear in mind that the woman's son is a symbol of the members of the church. This is a figure very frequently employed in the Scriptures, and one which no reader of the Bible will be likely to misunderstand. And the church, through her sons, is to rule over all the nations with a rod of iron; that is, a scepter which will crush out all opposition, and which it will be in vain to attempt to resist. The word of God assures us that this is to be. But the hour of the church's universal dominion had not come at the time referred to in this vision. It has not yet come. The sons of the church who are to rule the nations with a rod of iron, are yet to be born. In some of the centuries which are yet future, the principles of truth and righteousness will universally prevail; continent will vie with continent, island with island, city with city, home with home, in doing honor to the church and the church's Redeemer. As has been said, it seemed as if that time was about to come in the days which followed the apostolic age. The church increased with unprecedented rapidity. Persecutions scattered the disciples far and near, and wherever they went they preached the truth, and men believed it. Christians thought that the day of which the prophets had spoken was about to dawn, and that the knowledge of the Lord was about to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. But these expectations are disappointed. A great enemy appears and puts an end to the church's increase. It is as if her children, as soon as they are born, are snatched away from her, and she is left in all the loneliness of a bereaved mother. The fact that her child was caught up to God and to his throne is not specially significant. The meaning is that the child was taken away beyond her reach and beyond her knowledge.

This part of the symbol was fulfilled during the fierce persecutions which filled the dark ages. The church labored as hard as she had done during the apostolic age, but all her labor and travail were in vain. She preached, and prayed, and suffered, but sons and daughters did not multiply around her. She was left in all the loneliness of a childless widow. All this is symbolized by the fact that her child was caught up to God, and to his throne. The enemy prevailed not only against the church's increase, but also against the church herself. She was compelled to flee to the wilderness, where she remained in the place prepared for her for one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Here, the same period of time to which our

attention has already been called, is brought once more to our notice. The outer court of the temple was to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles for forty-two prophetic months, that is, for one thousand two hundred and sixty years; the two witnesses gave in their testimony clothed in sackcloth for one thousand two hundred and sixty years; and now the woman hides in the wilderness for the same length of time. This helps us to understand the vision, and confirms the interpretation we have already given. The woman is the true church; the great red dragon is the power of Rome; and the church is compelled to remain in obscurity during the whole period of Papal supremacy. That this part of the symbol has been fulfilled, no one who is acquainted with ecclesiastical history will question. The persecutions of Rome not only stopped the increase of the church, it drove the church into the obscure places and dark corners of the earth. Where was the church during those ages to which reference has just been made? On the thrones of the kingdoms? In the public places of great cities? No. To find the church, we must go to the dens and caves of the earth, to the fastnesses of the mountains, to the catacombs of Rome, and to the most inaccessible parts of the Roman empire. The true followers of Christ, of whom the world was not worthy, were hiding like partridges, and were hunted like wild beasts. The bride, the Lamb's wife, the heir of the throne of heaven, is a fugitive on earth. But still she is safe. God prepares a place for her in the wilderness. He provides her with food. He gives her manna from heaven to eat, and the water of endless life to drink. And when the end of the appointed time shall come, she shall come forth from her retirement to take her proper place, her seed shall increase, and through her sons and daughters, who are yet to be born, she shall fill the earth and rule the nations with a rod of iron.

But to return to the vision. The woman's child is snatched away. The woman herself is driven to seek a refuge in the wilderness. The dragon is left alone on the celestial plain. Can it be that he has completely triumphed? Can it be that the church is finally subdued before his power? No. Unexpected help appears. Michael and his angels draw their glittering swords, and through these angelic champions the church finds deliverance, and Satan finds a foe stronger than himself. The war in heaven must be reserved for future consideration. In the meantime let us rejoice in the church's safety. She may have mighty enemies, but Michael and his angels, and he who is the Lord of the angels, are her friends. She may have her seasons of persecution and obscurity, but the times and the seasons are in God's hand, and when the appointed period shall come to an end, persecution shall be changed into victory, and obscurity into glory. She may be exposed to dangers, many and great, but nothing can shake the faithfulness of the promiser or annul the promise; "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper": "the gates of hell shall not prevail against thee."

## LECTURE XXXV.

## THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON—CONTINUED.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.—REV. 12: 7-17.

In the concluding verses of this chapter, there are three points which claim our attention, and they will be discussed in their order, viz: 1. The war in heaven. 2. The song of victory. 3. The persecuted church in the wilderness.

I. Let us notice THE WAR IN HEAVEN. "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." In order to understand these verses, we must remember the method in which the truth was revealed to the apostle John. He was carried in the Spirit into heaven, and on the celestial plain, as on the stage of the future, one scene after another was made to pass before him. It was as if he looked upon the successive pictures of a panorama. The things which he saw were not actual occurrences; they were symbolic representations. Therefore, in our exposition, our plan has always been to reach a clear conception of the representation, and then to discover, if possible, the events in history which the representation was designed to shadow forth.

In the vision we are now considering, the first thing which the apostle saw

was a crowned and beautiful woman, who was a symbol of the true church. He then saw a great red dragon, which was a symbol of pagan and Papal Rome. There they stood upon the celestial plain, the dragon full of wrath against the woman, and ready to destroy her child as soon as it was born. But her child is snatched from her side and she is left alone. She herself is compelled to retire to the place prepared for her in the wilderness. The dragon stands alone on the celestial plain. Can it be that he is completely successful? Get the scene clearly fixed in the imagination. The dragon walks up and down the stage of the heavenly theater in triumph. But lo! an unexpected enemy appears, and the war in heaven begins, as if in panoramic representation.

1. The first thing which claims our attention here is *the parties* in this conflict. On the one side were Michael and his angels; on the other side were the dragon and his angels. Who was Michael? His name is mentioned in the visions of Daniel, where he is described "as one of the chief princes." His name is also mentioned in the epistle of Jude. Though it does not become us to speak positively on spiritual matters which the Scriptures have not made plain, yet the common opinion, that Michael was an angel and one of the leaders in the heavenly host, seems to be the correct one. We know that there are degrees in rank among the angels. There are principalities and powers; there are seraphs, and cherubs, and archangels. Of all this heavenly host, but two are mentioned by name in the word of God, viz.: Gabriel and Michael. The fact that they are mentioned by name leads us to believe that they are first among the angels and the leaders of the rest. From what we are told in the epistle of Jude, we are led to believe that it was no unusual thing for Michael and Satan to come into conflict. "Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil, (he disputed about the body of Moses,) durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee." Whatever the meaning of this passage may be, it certainly teaches us that Michael and the devil were accustomed to measure swords. And in this symbolic conflict which John saw, Michael was not alone. His angels fought by his side and under his leadership.

Michael and his angels were opposed by the dragon and his angels. As in an indictment against a criminal, all the names he has assumed are carefully included, so in verse 9 the dragon is described by his various aliases. He is called the serpent, because in the form of a serpent he deceived our first parents. He is called "the old serpent," because from the beginning of human history he has been the enemy of the race. Another alias by which he is known is "the devil"; that is, the accuser, for he accuses the people of God. Sometimes he accuses them to God himself, as he did in the case of Job, the patriarch of Uz; sometimes he accuses them to their fellow men, misrepresenting their motives and their conduct. Another alias he

has won for himself is "Satan"; that is, the adversary, for he is the great enemy of the church and the church's head. Another alias he has won for himself is "the deceiver of the whole world," for he has been so successful in deceiving the race by his wiles, that he leads them captive at his will. This great red dragon, alias the old serpent, alias the devil, alias Satan, alias the deceiver of the world, together with his angels, are those who fought against Michael and his angels.

The parties in this symbolical conflict are themselves symbolical. Michael and his angels are a symbol of the powers of heaven and holiness, which are ever engaged in the defence of the church and the divine glory; the dragon and his angels are the symbol of pagan and Papal Rome, which through all its history is the enemy of the true church, and which, as the instrument of Satan, has been so successful in hindering the progress of Christianity. This symbolic conflict represents to us this fact: the wicked angels set themselves in deadly hostility against the church and everything that God loves; the holy angels fight for the church and the kingdom of their divine Lord. It is well for us to remember this fact. It explains the safety of the church and the continued miracle of its preservation through all the ages. If our eyes were only opened to see things which are beyond the reach of mortal vision, we would see the marshalled hosts of Michael and Satan ever contending, not about the body of Moses, but about the mystical body of Christ, the church of God.

2. The second thing which claims our attention is *the result* of this symbolic conflict. Satan and his angels were defeated and cast out of heaven. Through a few hints which are dropped in the inspired word, we are led to the conclusion that, sometime in the unmeasured ages which preceded the creation of man, there was a rebellion in heaven, and that Satan and those who espoused his cause in that rebellion were driven out and banished to a region of everlasting punishment. But the words we are now considering do not refer to this rebellion and its result. We also know that there is a sense in which Satan and his hosts were defeated when Christ came into the world, established the Christian church, and gave his disciples power to cast out demons and to destroy the works of the devil. It is of this defeat Jesus speaks when he says, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." But the words we are now considering do not refer to this defeat; they are symbolic; and if we have been correct in our previous interpretations, they refer to the attempt of Satan to destroy the church during the ages which are known in history as the dark ages. At that time the Roman power, both under the emperors and under the popes, came near blotting true religion from the face of the earth. It would have been successful if the church had not been supernaturally sustained by the unseen armies of God. All this is shadowed forth by the symbolical war in heaven, in which the great red dragon and his hosts were defeated and cast out upon the earth. This defeat was celebrated by a song of victory.

II. THIS SONG OF VICTORY is the second point announced for consideration. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God night and day. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Such a song of victory is fitting and customary. As Moses sang a song of victory when Pharaoh and his host were overwhelmed in the Red sea, as David sang a song of victory when his foes were subdued, so now there is a song to celebrate the conclusion of the symbolical war in heaven between Michael and Satan. We are not told who sang this song, but we can easily discover from the song itself. It was sung in heaven; and therefore it must be the song either of the angels or of the redeemed saints. That it is the song of the glorified saints is evident from the fact that the saints on earth are spoken of as "our brethren." The angels call the saints "our fellow servants." None but saints may speak of other saints as "our brethren," a name which shows the intimate relation which exists between the members of the family of the redeemed, both those who have crossed the flood and those who are yet battling on the earthly side.

Their song is easily understood. They sing of the "salvation" which had now come; that is, of the deliverance from Satan which had been wrought out in their behalf. The power of this enemy they had long felt; their weakness they had long known; but now when they saw the angelic hosts drawing their glittering swords on the side of the church, they knew that salvation and deliverance had come. They sing of the "strength" which had now come; that is, of the power of God which had been put forth for their salvation and deliverance, for no strength save divine strength could cope with that of Satan. They sing of the "kingdom of God" which had now come. In the defeat of Satan and his hosts, they saw the promise of the ultimate triumph of the church, they saw the beginning of the glorious end, when earth redeemed from Satan's thralldom would be the kingdom of the Lord. They sing of the "power of Christ" the anointed, the Messiah, who, under the appointment of the Father, is head over all things for the church.

The occasion of this song of victory is plainly unfolded. It was because of the overthrow of Satan; "for the accuser of our brethren is cast down." Of the propriety of this alias of Satan, we have already spoken. When he is cast down there is occasion for thanksgiving. There is a second occasion for thanksgiving, and though it is closely connected with the first, it has received separate mention. This second occasion for thanksgiving is the

victory of the saints. They obtained their victory by the blood of the Lamb, that is, through the atonement of Christ; and by the word of their testimony, that is, by their faithful adherence to the truth of the gospel; and because they loved not their own lives unto the death, that is, they preferred death rather than life, if life could be purchased only by renouncing Christ and his truth. These are the means by which Satan is always overthrown, and by which Christianity is always established on the earth. Satan is ever accusing Christians, but by their holy lives, and their faithful testimony, and their patient suffering, even unto death, they show that his accusations are false. As the saints of to-day may use the same means, they may be as sure of victory as were any of the Christian heroes of the past. We can rely on the blood of the Lamb; we can be faithful in the testimony we bear; and though we are not now called to die for Christ, we are called to live for him; and the latter is as hard to do as the former, and as great a power against Satan. Never was a mightier power brought to bear against the church than at the time referred to in this vision; never was the church, humanly speaking, in greater danger than when Satan used all the machinery, civil and ecclesiastical, of Rome for her overthrow; and as she was not crushed then, we may be sure that she will never be. They who are washed in the blood of the Lamb are invulnerable. They who fight with the word, which is the sword of the Spirit, have a weapon whose keen edge will cleave through all opposition.

The glorified saints in this war in heaven and in the defeat of Satan, saw the promise of the ultimate triumph of the church. Therefore, they sang their song of victory; they called upon the heavens, and upon all whose home was in the heavens, to rejoice with them. They would have the angels join in their thanksgivings, for there is such a sympathy among the inhabitants of heaven, both those of angelic and those of earthly origin, that their joys are one. But though they saw in the symbolic defeat of Satan the promise of the ultimate triumph of the church, they knew that the end was not yet, and that before the end would come, the inhabitants of the earth and of the islands of the sea would have to endure a great fight of afflictions. The devil, cast out of heaven, would be filled with wrath, and he would do all he could to destroy the souls of men, and to fill the earth with misery and woe. And his wrath would burn all the fiercer, because he knew that the time was limited in which he could wage war with the saints, and that this limited time was drawing to a close.

This is the glorified saints' song of victory; but it ends with a note of woe, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of their brethren on the earth, who were yet, for a time, to feel the power of the adversary. It will be seen that there was occasion for this sorrow and warning, when we turn to the third point which was announced for consideration, viz.:



III. THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS. In the concluding verses of this chapter, which describe the persecuted church, there is a change in the scene of the vision. In the preceding part of the chapter the scene has been laid in heaven. But when Satan is cast out by the victorious Michael and his angels, we are to follow him in his descent to the earth. Though he is defeated, his enmity against the church is not lessened. He at once renews his persecution of the woman. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child." On this verse it is not necessary to dwell, for it but introduces us to the more important words that follow.

1. Let us, then, notice *the church in obscurity*. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Bear in mind that the woman is the symbol of the true church, and that the dragon is the symbol of pagan and Papal Rome. For a time the church had been occupying a prominent place in the earth. But when these fierce persecutions came, the church was compelled to retire to obscure places and dark corners of the earth. Where do we find the church at the period referred to in this vision? In dens and caves of the earth; in the fastnesses of the mountains; in the most inaccessible parts of the Roman empire. It was as if the wings of a great eagle had been given to it, that it might escape to places which the feet of man could not reach. In these obscure places the church was comparatively safe.

2. In the next place, *the church was nourished in obscurity*. God gave her bread from heaven to eat, and the water of an endless life to drink. During this long period the church was kept alive. So deep was its obscurity that, in the history of those ages, it is hard to find any trace of its existence; still, we can find enough, even in the testimony of its enemies, to convince us that it never became extinct.

3. *The church was nourished "for a time, and times, and half a time."* The word "time" as used in this connection may mean any definite period of time, as a day, or a month, or a year. However, when we compare this passage with other parallel passages in this book, and especially with the two parallel passages in the book of Daniel, we are brought to the conclusion that the word "time" is here used to describe a year. If this interpretation is correct, then the phrase, "time, and times, and half a time," would be equivalent to this: a "year, two years, and a half year"; or three years and a half; or forty-two months; or one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Here, then, the same period of time to which our attention has so often been called, is once more brought to our notice. The outer court of the temple was to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles for forty-two prophetic months; the two witnesses were to bear their testimony clothed in sack-

cloth for one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days ; and now the woman is to be nourished in the wilderness for the same length of time. In view of what has already been said with reference to this period, it will be sufficient to say, in the present connection, that the true church was to remain in obscurity during the whole period of Papal supremacy, a period which is to endure for one thousand two hundred and sixty years, which began about the seventh century, and which is now drawing towards its close.

4. *The church was often endangered during these years of obscurity.* "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." A flood of water is a common Scriptural figure to describe great multitudes and mighty armies. And this, without doubt, is its meaning here. Rome sent out army after army, expedition after expedition, to destroy the church. More than once it seemed as if the last vestige of true Christianity would be swept away, just as every living creature was swept away by the deluge in the days of Noah.

5. *The church was miraculously defended from its dangers.* "And the earth helped the woman ; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." For the fulfillment of this part of the vision, we have only to remember the deliverances of the church. When it seemed about to be destroyed, some new intervention was granted, an intervention as striking and miraculous as if the earth had opened her mouth to swallow up her enemies, as Korah, Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up. Such a deliverance is described by almost the same figure in Psalm 124 : "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us : then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul ; then the proud waters had gone over our soul."

6. In the last place, we have *Satan's enmity against the individual members of the church.* "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." When stripped of the imagery, the meaning is simply this: when Satan found that he could not destroy the church as such, he directed all his energies against the individual members of the church, who are here described as the remnant of the woman's seed. They are still further described as those "who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"; that is, as those who live holy lives and bear faithful witness for Christ as their Saviour. There were such faithful ones not only among the Waldenses, and Albigenses, and Lollards, and other communities of faithful Christians, but even in the monasteries of Rome, where they longed for Christ and the truth, but dared to give no expres-

sion to their longing. As a striking example of such a case, I quote the words of D'Aubigne. "A poor Carthusian, brother Martin, wrote this affecting confession: 'Oh, most merciful God! I know that I can only be saved and satisfy thy righteousness, by the merit, the innocent suffering, and death of thy well-beloved Son. Holy Jesus! my salvation is in thy hands. Thou canst not withdraw the hands of thy love from me; for they have created, and formed, and redeemed me. Thou hast inscribed my name with a pen of iron in rich mercy, and so as nothing can efface it, on thy side, thy hands and thy feet.' After this the good Carthusian placed his confession in a wooden box, and enclosed the box in a hole he had made in the wall of his cell. The piety of brother Martin would never have been known, if his box had not been found on December 21, 1776, in taking down an old building which had been part of the Carthusian convent at Basle. How many convents may have concealed similar treasures!" History of the Reformation, vol. 1, p. 21.

When the thrones are set and the books are opened, it will be found that many a saint whose name is unknown, kept the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ and suffered from the wrath of Satan. Such men as Wickliffe, and John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, belonged to the woman's seed, but they were not alone. Thousands of others, every whit as godly and faithful as they, suffered every form of cruelty; and in their cruel suffering and triumphant death, this word of prophecy was fulfilled: "the dragon made war with the woman's seed."

This is the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, and the great red dragon. The crowned and beautiful woman is the symbol of the true church. The great red dragon is the symbol of pagan and Papal Rome. If the correctness of the interpretation of these two symbols is granted, then all the rest of the vision is easily understood. And how beautifully and touchingly does this vision describe the history of the church these many years. Satan has long been persecuting the church, the remnant of the woman's seed. But the time, times and a half are drawing to an end. The one thousand two hundred and sixty years, spoken of so often by the inspired writers, will soon be past. Then the church will come forth from her retirement; persecution will be changed into victory; obscurity will be changed into renown. Whether we will be alive to see the end of the appointed time or not, we cannot tell; but it will come, the dragon will be defeated, and the church will be crowned with glory and universal dominion, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

## LECTURE XXXVI.

## THE BEAST WITH TEN HORNS.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.—REV. 13: 1-10.

THE vision of the preceding chapter is a symbolic revelation of the dangers and deliverances of the true church during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of its obscurity and persecution. These dangers and deliverances have been described in previous lectures. But in our exposition of that vision, our attention was occupied mostly with the church. We saw the symbol by which it was represented, a beautiful woman clothed with the light, going forth with all the majesty of the moon, and crowned with a diadem of stars. We saw her great expectations that, through her children who were about to be born, she would fill the earth and rule it with a rod of iron. We saw how bitterly her expectations were disappointed; her child was snatched from her side and beyond her knowledge; and she was left alone. We saw her driven into the wilderness, nourished in obscurity, threatened with overwhelming dangers, and marvelously delivered. We saw how the remnant of her seed were hunted like partridges upon the mountains. But in all this, our attention was only incidentally called to the persecuting power. It is true, the dragon was introduced upon the stage of the heavenly theater, but only to enable us to understand the danger to which the church was exposed, and the deliverance she experienced. The woman was the central figure of the vision; the dragon only the secondary one. In other words, the vision of the preceding chapter has to do for the most part with the persecuted church, and not with the power which persecuted the church. But who

does not desire to know something more of this persecuting power? Surely the apostle would desire greater knowledge; and surely we, who live near the conclusion of this prophetic period, may well desire to know more of this power, its characteristics and its methods. To gratify this natural desire, and to make the revelation full and complete, we have the vision of the chapter upon whose consideration we enter in the present lecture; a vision in which the persecuting power is made the central figure, and in which our attention is directed not so much to the church as to the church's great enemies. These enemies are described as two beasts, one coming up out of the sea, and the other coming up out of the land; one having ten horns and seven heads, and the other the horns of a lamb and the voice of a dragon. The first of these beasts will occupy our attention in the present lecture. If the remarks which have just been made are founded on truth, we would expect this beast to be similar to the great red dragon of the previous vision, and to shadow forth the same power; and as we proceed in our exposition, we will find this expectation fully met. The characteristics, the appearance and the power of the dragon and the wild beast from the sea are so similar, that the two symbols must be one and the same. In our exposition we will follow our usual order. We will first notice the symbols; then the things which the symbols would naturally lead us to expect; then the fulfillment of these symbols.

I. What did John see? What were THE SYMBOLS which were made to pass before him in this vision? In the opening words of this chapter the apostle says, "I stood upon the sand of the sea." John was standing, in vision, upon the shores of some sea, and he saw coming up out of the waves of the sea a fabulous monster, as terrible in appearance as the red dragon of the previous vision, if not more terrible. It had seven heads, on which were names of blasphemy; it had ten horns, on which were ten crowns. Its general appearance was that of a leopard, but it had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. Great power and authority were given to it by the dragon, or rather by Satan, of whom the dragon was the symbol. And while the apostle was looking on, one of the heads of the wild beast was wounded to death. It was not merely a severe wound—it was a deadly wound, and one for which there seemed to be no cure. But the beast did not die. Strange to relate, the deadly wound was healed, and the world wondered and worshiped the beast and the dragon. The beast, marvelously healed of his fatal wound, spake against the name of God, and against the tabernacle of God, and against them that dwelt in heaven. He made war with the saints and overcame them. His blasphemies and victories continued for forty and two months, and all the nations and countries of earth, save the few whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life, worshiped him as God. Then the vision concludes with the

common Scriptural note of warning, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," and with a word of encouragement, that those who led into captivity would themselves be led into captivity, and that those who drew the sword would themselves perish with the sword, a word of encouragement which foreshadows the overthrow of the persecuting power by the same means which it had used for the overthrow of others.

II. And now, laying aside for the present any theories we may have adopted concerning the explanation of this vision, let us inquire what **THESE SYMBOLS WOULD NATURALLY LEAD US TO EXPECT.** The central figure of this vision is the beast rising out of the sea. If we have been correct in our explanations of the beasts which have been brought to our notice in previous visions, analogy would lead us to explain this beast as a symbol of some earthly power, for in this way the previous beasts have been explained. This beast rose out of the sea. The sea is a symbol of great multitudes and nations, especially when such multitudes and nations are in commotion. This part of the symbol would lead us to expect that the earthly power of which the beast was the symbol would grow up out of the nations of the earth, probably out of the midst of great commotions among the nations of the earth. The seven heads and the ten horns would lead us to expect that this power would somehow be divided, and yet united in one powerful body. The ten crowns would lead us to expect that this power would be a kingdom, for a crown is always and everywhere the symbol of authority. The names of blasphemy would lead us to expect that this power would claim for itself names to which it had no right, and which belong alone to the supreme ruler of the universe. The appearance of the beast would lead us to expect that this earthly power would be as rapid in its progress as a leopard, as strong as a bear, and as fierce and ravenous as a lion. The fact that this beast received its power from the dragon would lead us to expect that this earthly power would be anti-Christian, and an instrument of Satan in accomplishing his purposes in the world. The fact that one of the heads of this beast received a deadly wound would lead us to expect that this earthly power would in some way receive a deadly blow from which there would seem no possibility of recovery, and that in some marvelous way it would be restored to its former prosperity. The fact that the beast spoke blasphemies and made war with the saints, would lead us to expect that this earthly power would be a reviler of the true God and the enemy of the true church. The fact that the beast exercised authority over all the nations except those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life, would lead us to expect that this earthly power would be the acknowledged ruler of the whole world, except the remnant of the scattered saints. These are the prominent symbols in this vision, and these are the things which these symbols would naturally lead us to expect. It therefore *only* remains to ask and answer the question,

III. Have these symbols received AN ADEQUATE FULFILLMENT in actual history? In answering this question, it will be necessary to consider separately and carefully the several parts of the vision.

1. Let us consider *the appearance* of the symbolic beast. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion." In the introduction of this discourse it was intimated that this vision is a supplement to the vision of the great red dragon, and that it unfolds, more fully than has been done before, the characteristics of the great enemy of the church. If this is so, then the wild beast from the sea is a symbol of the Roman power. That this explanation is correct, will appear more evident as we proceed and see how exactly all the things which are recorded of the beast find their fulfillment in the history of the Roman power. The Roman power grew up out of great commotion among the nations of the earth. There had been, according to the prophecy of Daniel, to which I have referred, and to which I will have occasion to refer hereafter, three universal kingdoms. The Babylonian kingdom had been overthrown by the Persian, and the Persian by the Greek; and when the Greek kingdom crumbled to pieces the Roman rose out of its ruins, and became even greater than any which had preceded it. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the beast rose out of the sea, for the sea is a symbol of great multitudes or peoples, especially in commotion.

We might not have been able to explain what was symbolized by the seven heads, if it had not been for the angel's explanation of the parallel vision which is contained in chapter XVII of this book. He tells us that the seven heads are the seven hills upon which the woman sitteth. It is well known that Rome, the capital of the Roman power, and the centre from which she ruled the world, was builded on seven hills. The meaning of the expression, "the seven-hilled city," is known to every school boy in the land. But the angel gives another explanation of the seven heads in Rev. 17: 10. "And they are seven kings," or rather seven forms of government. "Five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come." What are meant by these kings or forms of government? Without entering into any lengthy discussion, I will simply state that there have been in the Roman power seven forms of government, viz., by kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors, and imperial tyrants. In the days of John five had fallen; the sixth, that of the emperors, was then bearing rule; the seventh was yet to come. If this is the correct interpretation of the vision of chapter XVII, and if that vision is parallel with the one we are now considering, then we have clearly revealed the meaning of this part of the vision. The seven heads shadow forth the seven-hilled

city which was the seat of the Roman power, and the seven forms of government under which, in succession, the Roman power ruled the world.

The Roman power was divided into provinces and subordinate kingdoms. At the time supposed to be referred to in this vision, the principal subordinate kingdoms, as enumerated by historians, are ten in number. Their names were mentioned in a previous lecture, and they need not now be repeated. This is shadowed forth by the ten horns which grew up out of the beast's heads. The Roman power, under all its various forms of government, and in all its subordinate kingdoms, exercised supreme authority. This is shadowed forth by the ten diadems upon the ten horns. The Roman power arrogated to itself more than human authority; it claimed for itself some of the attributes of God. This is shadowed forth by the names of blasphemy upon the heads of the beast. We will have occasion to say something more hereafter concerning the blasphemies of which the Roman power was guilty. The Roman power combined in itself all the terrible and cruel elements which existed in the great empires which preceded it. In Daniel's vision, Dan. 7, which throws so much light upon these visions of the Apocalypse, the lion is introduced as the symbol of the Babylonian power; the bear is introduced as the symbol of the Persian power; the leopard is introduced as the symbol of the Grecian power; and a non-descript monster as the symbol of the Roman power. But in John's vision, the Roman power is represented by an animal made up of all three. It was partly a leopard, partly a bear, and partly a lion. There is an obvious propriety in this mixed symbol, for the Roman power was made up of the empires represented by the other symbols of Daniel's vision, and it combined in itself all the terrible and cruel elements which existed in the great empires which preceded it.

Thus the appearance of the beast confirms the conclusion that the beast is the symbol of the Roman power. If there had been a resemblance in only one or two points, it would not have carried conviction to any mind; but such a striking resemblance in every point cannot be accidental. The beast, rising up out of the sea, like the fourth beast in Daniel's vision, like the dragon of John's previous vision, and like the scarlet colored beast of chapter XVII, must be a symbol of the Roman power.

2. Let us consider *the source of the beast's power*, and see whether this confirms the conclusion at which we have arrived. "And the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority." These words carry us back to the previous vision, where it is said that the dragon was that "old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." The only question we have to answer here is, did the Roman power receive its authority from Satan? To answer this question we must apply the Saviour's rule: "by their fruits ye shall know them." Those who receive their power from God, do the works of God; those who receive their power



from the prince of this world, do the works of Satan. Do the acts of Roman power belong to the works of God or to the works of Satan? The worship of images, the adoration of relics and saints so-called, the persecution of the church, the oppression, and murders, and licentiousness which prevailed, all these things are evidently of their father, the devil. No one can read Roman history without being convinced that the great Roman power was the servant of Satan, and that it did the works of Satan. All this is shadowed forth in symbol by the fact that the dragon gave the beast his power, and his seat, and his authority.

3. Let us consider *the healing of the wounded head*. "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast." Is there anything in the history of the Roman power which this symbol adequately shadows forth? Let it be remembered that the seven heads represent seven successive forms of government. Therefore, the fatal wounding of one of these heads would indicate that the Roman empire was in danger of destruction. There was a time when such destruction seemed to be impending. That time was when paganism was being superseded by Christianity. So great were the political convulsions of that time, that it seemed as if Rome, and the power of which Rome was the capital, were about to be blotted out from the face of the earth. Let me refer to him who is the unconscious interpreter of the Apocalypse, and whose researches, more than those of any other man, have unfolded the meaning of these prophetic visions which he did not believe. I mean the historian Gibbon. Speaking of this very time, and using, in some instances, the very figure of the verse we are now considering, he says: "the sword of the Christian struck down the last pagan head of the Roman empire." Again: "the heathens cherished a secret hope that some auspicious revolution would yet restore to them all that they had lost, \* \* \* till the violent and repeated strokes of the Christians gradually destroyed the pagan." Again: "Theodosius inflicted a deadly wound on the superstitions of the pagans." Again: "like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome must have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been actuated by a vital principle, which restored her to honor and dominion." Listen to the testimony of two other historians. Augustine Steuchus writes, "the empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the pontificate, Rome would have become uninhabitable." Blondus writes, "the princes of the world now adore and worship as perpetual dictators the successors, not of Cæsar, but of the fisherman, Peter; that is, the supreme pontiff, the substitute of the aforementioned emperor."

What is the plain meaning of all this? It is that at the period referred to, the Roman power trembled upon the very verge of utter destruction. To a looker on it seemed as if its continued existence could not be hoped

for. But lo! Rome pagan was changed into Rome Papal; dying paganism was revived in popery; and the Roman power entered upon a new lease of life and prosperity, to the wonder of the world. All this is shadowed forth by the words, "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed."

4. Let us consider *the worship* which was paid to the dragon and the beast. "And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him"? I do not suppose the world in those days worshiped the devil in his proper form and character; but those who worship the instruments of Satan may be said with exact truth to worship Satan. And I have shown that the Roman power was such an instrument of Satan. Therefore, if men worshiped the Roman power, it may be said in figurative language that they worshiped both the dragon and the beast. That the pagan emperors received divine homage from their subjects is well known. That the popes, who were the successors of the emperors in Rome, claimed and received divine homage, is too well known to require proof. The worship which, according to Scripture, should be paid to God alone, has been through many centuries given to those who sat upon the throne of Roman authority.

5. Let us consider *the blasphemies* of the beast. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." The time during which power was given to the beast to continue his blasphemies was forty and two months. With regard to this time, nothing need now be said. It is the same period to which our attention has so often been called. It is the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, the three years and a half, the time, times and a half time, of the preceding visions. But bear this in mind: this period during which the beast was to continue his blasphemies shows that this vision is parallel with the ones we have already explained, and that it refers to the same era in human history. To blaspheme is to speak evil of any one. To blaspheme God is to speak evil of him, or to claim for mere creatures the divine attributes or names. The beast also blasphemed the tabernacle of God; that is, his dwelling place, the church, for of his church he has said, "This is my rest, here will I stay, for I have desired it." The beast also blasphemed them that dwelt in heaven; that is, the saints of God, whose everlasting home is in heaven. The only question to be answered here is: did the Roman power blaspheme God, and his church, and his saints? To answer this question, we have only to read extracts from the history of the past. In the confession of the Catholic faith, which had to be taken by all Protestants in Hungary, conforming to that

faith, we find the following: "2. We confess that the Pope of Rome is the head of the church, and cannot err. 3. We confess and are certain that the Pope of Rome is vicar of Christ and has plenary power of retaining and remitting sins, according to his will, and of thrusting men down into hell. 4. We confess that whatever new thing the Pope of Rome may have instituted, whether it be in Scripture or out of Scripture, is true, divine, and full of salvation, and therefore ought to be regarded as of higher value by lay-people than even the precepts of the living God. 5. We confess that the most holy pontiff ought to be honored by all with divine honor, with more prostration than even what is due to Christ himself. 11. We confess that the Pope has the power of altering Scripture, or increasing or diminishing it according to his will." In the fourth session of the Lateran Council, a prelate thus addressed the Pope: "Thou art our shepherd, our physician, in short, a second God upon earth." At the sixth session, a bishop called the Pope, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the promised Saviour. Thou shalt rule from sea to sea." In the ninth session, it was said to the Pope by one of the high officials, "the sight of thy divine majesty does not a little terrify me, for I am not ignorant that all power, both in heaven and in earth, is given unto you; the prophetic saying is fulfilled in you, 'all the kings of the earth shall worship him, and all the nations shall serve him.'" Cardinal Bellarmine says, "the Pope is the father of fathers, the pontiff of Christians, the prince of priests, the vicar of Christ, the head of the body of the church, the foundation of the building, the universal bishop." Pope Nicholas says, "the Pope, who is called God by Constantine, can never be bound or released by man, for God cannot be judged by man." Of Alexander VI, it was said, "Cæsar was a man, Alexander was a God."

What need we of any further proof? The names and homage which the popes ever claimed for themselves, and which their followers have ever been so ready to give, their assumption of infallibility and of miraculous power, their mockery of the church and of the saints, all prove, as plainly as history can prove anything, that the Roman power has blasphemed the name of God, and his tabernacle, and them whose home is in heaven.

6. Let us consider *the beast's persecution of the saints*. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The Saviour is here described as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He is well called the Lamb of God, for he is the Great Sacrifice which alone can take away the sin of the world. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, not because he was then actually put to death, but because his sacrifice was then determined; and the purpose of

God is so certain, that what he determines may be spoken of as actually accomplished. The saints are described as those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. In this beautiful figure the Lord Jesus is represented as keeping a register, in which the names of all those who are to obtain eternal life are recorded. Surely, then, none can be lost, none can be forgotten; for the name of every one, written in the book of life, is ever before the Lamb. And the words we are now considering teach us that the beast persecutes the saints, and persecutes them with so much success that all the world save the saints will be subject to his authority. The only question we have to answer here is: did the Roman power thus persecute the saints? To answer this question, we have only to read extracts from the history of the past. Listen to a sketch of the massacre of St. Bartholomew: "At length Charles IX. gave the fatal order for the murder of his subjects. The alarm bell of St. Germain was instantly rung and in a moment the Palais, the Tuilleries, the banks of the river, the public places, the streets, the churches and edifices of Paris were brilliantly illuminated.

Guided by those terrible lights, which enveloped them as in a circle of fire, they distinguished the dwellings of heretics by the fresh made marks. 'Open, by the command of the king!' was the order given by the murderers. Some hastened to obey, and their lives were extinguished with the lights which they brought to see who called them; others, opening their windows to discover who knocked at so unseasonable an hour, fell struck by twenty balls at once; another, burying himself in the bed clothes, would perhaps pretend to be fast asleep; his door was shattered in pieces, and two or three assassins, separating from the rest, ran and slaughtered him in his bed. Sometimes they left the house unstained with blood; but, dragging the victim from his couch into the street, they gave him up to the weapons of the populace. As the spoils of the doomed were to belong to those who should despatch them, a thousand blades were raised at once over the unfortunate wretch, whose death, swift as lightning, left no time for pain. Happy they, who were thus surprised in their first sleep; their sufferings were brief; but when the hands of the murderers became wearied with slaughter, the agony of the sufferer was prolonged for hours.

While blood was thus spilt in torrents before the eyes of the queen mother, the bell of the Palais rang, and the general massacre began. At this signal, Tavennes and the duke of Nevers drew their swords, crying, 'Kill! kill!' The night guards, the citizens, among whom arms had been distributed, the whole tribe of murderers sallied forth from their lurking places, repeating, 'Kill! kill!' The shrill sound of the bells, the clatter of arms, the vagabond tramp of the assassins, the flickering glare of torches, mingled with shouts, which the night echo rendered still more horrible. The massacre then became general; there was no pity for sex, age or con-

dition; no blood came amiss, provided that it circulated in heretic veins; and these were the signs by which the heretics were distinguished: whoever shuts his door at the approach of an armed band is a heretic; whoever refuses to answer or begs his life is a heretic; whoever has not a white badge on his arm is a heretic; whoever does not come when the murderer calls is a heretic. The assassins had no need to speak; here were no judges; all were executioners; but if words did now and then drop from their lips, it was to complain to one another of their fatigue, or to insult the sufferer; nay, it was often an infernal laugh that greeted his last sigh.

Pursued on all sides by those insidious flames with which the capital was lit up, driven like a flock of sheep, tracked like deer, in vain did the Protestants endeavor to fly from fate. If they would have sought refuge in the Catholic churches, armed men guarded the doors of the sanctuary; if they approached the Louvre, the Swiss awaited them with presented muskets; if they burst open the prison doors, to conceal themselves among the malefactors whom the justice of men had condemned, the jailors denounced and drove them out by main force. If they attempted to gain the banks of the river, the implements of destruction were quite ready; boat hooks to catch them in their flight, and to knock them on the head; poles to thrust them into the water; if they took shelter in the dark, they fell into the snares of an assassin lurking for human prey; if they sought the light, the light was deadly as the darkness; death was everywhere, in their beds, on their housetops, within, without, in the public places, and in the very waters of the river.

They were flung alive into the Seine, and dragged out to be plunged in again; if the unfortunate creatures, struggling against the current, contrived to reach the shore, invisible hands, armed with sharp spikes, thrust them back into the stream, which drove some upon the sand of an islet facing the Louvre, and carried others towards Chaillot, Auteuil, St. Cloud, and the adjacent parts, to which these carcasses carried terror and infection. The grave diggers were too few in number, or worked to death. The Prevot des Marchands and the Echevins were obliged to double their wages to induce them to go to those distant places to bury the corpses of heretics; a column of them started, carrying along with them all the ordinary implements of their calling, and it was several days before they returned to Paris. It is calculated that in this interval about eleven hundred drowned persons were interred. The boatmen distinguished themselves in this abominable night. Standing up in their light barks, they cleft the water with the rapidity of lightning, striking the heads that rose above the surface, separating the hands clasped in the last prayer, and lifting up bodies by the garments, and dropping them back into the abyss, till they were sure they were suffocated.

Suspended, not interrupted, the carnage recommenced at eight in the

morning, but with colder and more ingenious cruelty than before; if the victims were multiplied, so were the executioners. Darkness no longer shrouded the abode of the heretic from the eye of suspicion; there was now no inaccessible retreat, and places were ransacked to which the light of day never penetrated. How many of the Protestants now regretted that darkness and deplored the return of that light which they had so earnestly solicited of God in their prayers! The sun, it is true, beamed upon the vengeance of some of those who sold their lives dearly and stained the thresholds of houses with the blood of the victors. Almost all expired with folded hands and faces turned toward the palace of the sovereign. Such were the last scenes of the ever-memorable drama of St. Bartholomew."

And this is but one instance out of hundreds and thousands which might be quoted. But the persecutions of the saints are well known. Every land over which the Roman power exercised authority was deluged with blood. Every page of the history of the Roman power contains accounts of massacres every whit as bloody and sickening as that of St. Bartholomew. It is too true that the Roman power made war with the saints and overcame them in all the kindreds, and tongues, and nations of the earth.

Tell me not that these resemblances are accidental. One or two points of resemblance might be accidental, but so perfect a resemblance in so many points is beyond the power of accident. We are therefore brought to the conclusion that the beast, which arose from the sea, was designed by the Spirit of inspiration to be the symbol of the Roman power.

On the concluding verses of the subject of the present lecture, it is not necessary to dwell at length. The note of warning, "if any man have an ear, let him hear," so often repeated in the New Testament, reminds us that the revelation of this vision is an important one, and that it deserves the special attention of every reader of the gospel. It is added, for the comfort of the church, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." The Saviour teaches the same truth when he says, "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." It is a well known principle, established both by inspiration and by observation, that God will punish every transgressor of his law; and the punishment often bears a striking resemblance to the transgression. Jacob deceived his father, and he was deceived by his children. David violated the purity of the family relation, and the purity of his own family was violated. Adonibezek was mutilated with the mutilation he had inflicted on his prisoners. Those who lead into captivity will be led into captivity; those who slay with the sword will be slain with the sword. The Roman power has led into captivity, and it shall some day be led

into captivity; it has slain with the sword, and it shall some day be slain with the sword. The fulfillment of this word of prophecy is for the most part yet future, but it shall be fulfilled, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. In believing that this time shall come is the faith of the saints; in waiting for its coming is the patience of the saints. And why should they not believe? Their God is true. Why should they not wait patiently? Not one word God has spoken shall fail. And this God is our God; these promises are our promises. Therefore it is our duty and privilege, as well as the duty and privilege of those who lived and died in the days when the beast was at the height of his power, to strive after and reach the faith and patience of the saints.

## LECTURE XXXVII.

### THE BEAST WITH TWO HORNS.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.—REV. 13: 11-18.

THIS vision is one of no ordinary difficulty, and many different explanations have been suggested as to its meaning. If we bear in mind the points we have established in our previous lectures, we will not be entirely baffled in our attempt to explain the passage before us. First of all, we must endeavor to reach a clear conception of the symbols as they presented themselves to the apostle in his vision. Let us in spirit stand by his side and see, as far as the inspired description enables us, what he saw. He saw another beast coming up, not out of the sea as the former beast had done, but out of the land. This beast, in many important particulars, differed from the one which had preceded it. The former had seven heads, this had but one; the former had ten horns, this had the two horns of a lamb. But though

it had the horns and general appearance of a lamb, it had the voice of a dragon. Though it was not as terrible in its outward appearance as the first beast, it exercised all the first beast's power. It was the servant of the first beast, and its great mission was to make men worship the first beast. To accomplish this mission, it made fire come down from heaven and wrought many miracles. It caused the inhabitants of the earth to make an image of the first beast; and to this image it gave life and speech. It compelled men to worship this image, and it killed those who refused to worship. It set a mark, which consisted either of the name of the beast or the number of his name, upon the right hand and forehead of the worshipers of the beast, and none but those who carried this mark could engage in the pursuits of life. And the vision concludes with a strange and dark enigma. The number of the beast's name is given, even six hundred and sixty-six; and from this number, the man of understanding and wisdom is exhorted to discover the beast's name.

These are the symbols of this vision, and they lead us to expect that the thing symbolized by the second beast would, in its origin and its appearance, differ from the thing symbolized by the first beast. They lead us to expect that the things symbolized would be similar in power. They lead us to expect that the thing symbolized by the second beast would be the creature and the servant of the thing symbolized by the first beast; and that the great mission of the former would be to compel men to worship the latter. To do this, he would perform great wonders, make an image of the first beast, give it life and speech, kill those who refused to give their allegiance to the first beast, set a mark upon the worshipers by which they could be distinguished from all other men, and suffer none but those who were thus marked to engage in trade or in the ordinary pursuits of life. These are the things which these symbols would naturally lead us to expect; and whatever interpretation we adopt, these things must be found in it, or the interpretation will be incorrect. We have, therefore, only to inquire whether these expected things are to be found in actual history. In other words, we have to inquire whether there ever has been on the earth a power, which is adequately symbolized by the lamb-like and dragon-voiced beast. Of course, if the theory on which we are interpreting the Apocalypse is correct, there is a particular time when we are to look for this power. We are not to look for it before the coming of Christ, or in the earlier centuries of the Christian era, or in the glorious day of the millennium, which has not yet dawned. We are to look for it in those centuries which are called in history the dark ages, while the outer court of the temple was being trodden under foot by the spiritual Gentiles, while the two witnesses were giving in their testimony clothed in sackcloth, while the crowned and beautiful woman was nourished in obscurity, and while the beast with seven heads and ten horns continued to speak his blasphemous



mies against God, and the church, and the saints. In other words, we are to look for this power during the period of one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days, or forty-two prophetic months, or three and a half prophetic years, the period which is so often referred to in these visions, and which has been explained as the period of the Papal church's supremacy and the true church's obscurity. The question, then, which we have now to answer is this: is there, in the history of this period, any power which is adequately symbolized by the lamb-like and dragon-voiced beast?

We answer this question in the affirmative. We believe the power symbolized by the second beast to be the Papal clergy, including popes, and cardinals, and bishops, and abbots, and priests, and monks, and all the various orders of ecclesiastics in the Papal church. Do not suffer the things symbolized by the first and the second beast to become confounded with one another; for though in some respects they are similar and closely related, yet they are separate and distinct. The first beast symbolizes pagan and Papal Rome; that is, Rome as a political power, for it is well known that the popes as well as the emperors exercised civil authority. The second beast symbolizes Rome as an ecclesiastical power—a power which was exercised by the popes, bishops and priests, not in their character of temporal rulers, but in their character as ecclesiastical rulers. Though the popes, bishops and priests exercised both civil and ecclesiastical authority, yet these things need not be united. There may be civil power without ecclesiastical; and there may be ecclesiastical power without civil. Let it then be remembered that the beast with seven heads and ten horns is the symbol of Rome civil; and that the beast with the two horns of a lamb is the symbol of Rome ecclesiastical, that is, of the Papal clergy; for the Papal clergy was the embodiment of the ecclesiastical power of Rome. Now the question presents itself for an answer, does the symbol of the lamb-like and dragon-voiced beast find an adequate fulfillment in the Papal clergy? In order to answer this question, we must consider separately and carefully the different parts of the vision.

I. Let us notice THE ORIGIN OF THE SECOND BEAST. "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth." Its origin is in striking contrast with that of the first beast, which came up out of the sea. If the origin of the first beast symbolizes the fact that the civil power of Rome took its rise out of the midst of great commotions among the nations of the world, then the origin of the second beast would symbolize the fact that the power of the Papal clergy grew up without commotion and without excitement. And this was actually the case. The Papal hierarchy grew up so quietly and gradually, that it is difficult to say when the clergy ceased to be true ministers of the gospel and became lords over God's her-

itage. No sudden and marked commotion marks the time of their full investment with the power they claimed over the church. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the second beast came up "out of the earth."

II. Let us notice THE APPEARANCE OF THE SECOND BEAST. "And he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." The two horns as of a lamb may point to the two-horned mitre which the Papal clergy wear; it may point to the two orders of the Papal clergy, viz., the regular and the secular; but it seems more probable that there is a reference to the Lord's description of false teachers: "Beware of them who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." This word is fulfilled in the Papal clergy. They came in sheep's clothing; they came with great professions of innocence and purity; but their speech betrayed them; they had the voice of a dragon; they spake blasphemies and devoured the church. They professed to be the servants of him who is the Lamb of God, but in reality they were the servants of the old serpent, "called the Devil, and Satan." As proof of this, take the two distinguishing characteristics of Satan as they are given by the fourth evangelist: "The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth." Were not these the distinguishing characteristics of the Papal clergy at the time referred to? They abode not in the truth, for they taught the traditions and commandments of men, and not the word of God. They were murderers from the beginning, as the blood of many a slaughtered saint will testify. They professed to be ministers of the Lamb, but another spirit inspired them. Their apparent meekness and piety, but real cruelty and pride, are shadowed forth in symbol by the fact that the beast had the appearance of a lamb, but the voice of a dragon.

III. Let us notice THE POWER OF THE SECOND BEAST TO COMPEL MEN TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST. "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." The power of the Papal clergy was in extent and kind equal to that of civil Rome. It was equal in extent, for wherever the temporal power of Rome extended, there the power of the Roman priesthood was exerted. It was equal in kind, for as the temporal power of Rome was supreme and absolute, so the power of the Roman priesthood was supreme and absolute. These two powers were intimately connected and strangely interwoven. They mutually sustained each other, for one could not have existed without the other. We saw in the last lecture that the Roman kingdom would have been blotted from the face of the earth if it had not been for the uprising of the hierarchy. And the Roman priesthood would have been overthrown

again and again if it had not been supported by the sword of the civil government. The Papal clergy exerted all its mighty power to compel men to worship—that is, to reverence and obey—the great Roman government. They cared not so much for the souls as for the bodies and possessions of men. It was the influence of the Papal clergy, reaching out into every country, and every city, and every hamlet, and every home of Christendom, which gave Rome its mighty power in the world, which the strongest nations could not shake off, and which the boldest men dare not brave. It was the influence of the Papal clergy which secured a world-wide honor for those who reigned in the city of Rome. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the second beast—that is, the Papal clergy—exercised all the power of the first beast—that is, the Roman government—and compelled men to worship him.

IV. Let us notice THE POWER OF THE SECOND BEAST TO WORK MIRACLES. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." Of course these were not true miracles, but pretended miracles. They were the signs and lying wonders which Paul tells us would characterize the man of sin and son of perdition. This is evident from the fact that they "deceived" them that dwelt on the earth; and if they had been true miracles, they would not have deceived men. It is well known that the pretended miracles of the priesthood have through all the ages exerted a great influence. The history of the church through the middle ages is full of such wonders. Weeping pictures, bleeding images, speaking relics, marvelous deliverances, and miraculous cures are too common to excite astonishment. And the days of these pretended miracles are not ended. Even now, in France, there are images of the Virgin which are said to work miraculous cures; and to these shrines multitudes of deceived pilgrims are flocking from every land. All these miracles are wrought under the supervision and by the direction of the clergy. And passing by all the other pretended miracles, there is the standing miracle of transubstantiation. By a few words, the priest changes the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, a miracle beside which the miracles of the apostles and prophets are but childish fables.

Of all the pretended miracles, but one is particularly mentioned in the words we are now considering, viz., the bringing of fire from heaven upon the earth. In Old Testament times this miracle was wrought to visit the disobedient with divine punishment. Thus, the cities of the plain, and those who came out to arrest the prophet Elijah, were visited. So the Papal clergy claimed to be able to bring visitations of divine wrath upon the heads of their enemies by their anathemas. They claimed to be able by their

ecclesiastical power to make the fire of God's wrath to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the second beast wrought great wonders by which men were deceived.

V. Let us notice THE POWER OF THE SECOND BEAST TO CAUSE MEN TO MAKE AN IMAGE OF THE FIRST BEAST. "Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." What is this image? Remember that the first beast is the symbol of the civil power of Rome. Whatever, then, the image is, it must bear a resemblance to the civil power of Rome. We believe this image to be the general councils of the Papal church. These councils were composed of representatives from all parts of the Papal dominion. These representatives were all of the clerical order. They met in Rome when called by the pope; they discussed and decided ecclesiastical matters, and their decisions were binding on the church. Do these general councils bear any resemblance to the civil power of Rome? Without controversy, they do. They were modeled after the Roman senate. In the manner of election, in their mode of discussion, and in the binding force of their decrees, one was the image of the other. They differed only in this: one had to do with civil affairs, the other with ecclesiastical affairs. These general councils were, beyond question, a device of the Papal clergy for advancing their own interests and strengthening their own power. No one can read the history of the councils of the Papal church without being convinced that they were devised by the Papal clergy and fashioned after the model of the Roman senate. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the second beast commanded men to make an image of the first beast.

VI. Let us notice THE POWER OF THE SECOND BEAST TO GIVE LIFE TO THIS IMAGE. "And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." It was a peculiarity of these general councils that they were summoned through the instrumentality of the clergy; that their delegates were elected through the instrumentality of the clergy; that in them none but the clergy had a right to vote, and that their decisions were carried into execution by the clergy. These things are well known. Since these things are so, there is an obvious propriety in saying that the clergy gave life to the general councils, that the clergy caused the general councils to speak, and that the clergy caused those to be killed who would not worship the image of the beast; that is, who would not acknowledge the authority and obey the decrees of the general councils. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the second beast had power to give life to the image of the first beast.

VII. Let us notice THE MARK BY WHICH THE SECOND BEAST DISTINGUISHED THE WORSHIPERS of the first beast and his image. "And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." We all know what tattooing is. In our days some men, especially sailors, cause their name, or the name of their vessel, or some device, to be marked on their hand or arm. These marks are made indelible by puncturing the skin and inserting some coloring matter. The most of us have seen such marks. There is an allusion to such a custom in the verses we are now considering; for it was customary in the days of John, and long before, and long after, for certain classes of persons to have such marks imprinted on their persons. This was especially the case with slaves, and soldiers, and the devotees of the heathen gods. A slave was marked with the name of his master; a soldier with the name of his emperor; a devotee with the name of his God. In this way every slave, and soldier, and devotee could be known. It was not always the name which was used for this purpose. Sometimes a peculiar sign or device was used. Sometimes a number was used. And the second beast in the vision caused such a name, or mark, or number to be set upon the right hand or forehead of the worshipers of the image. When stripped of the figure, the meaning is simply this: the worshipers of the image were distinguished from all others. To do this has always been one great aim of the Papal church. By its rites, and ceremonies, and observances, it has drawn a broad line of distinction between its members and all others. There seems to be an allusion here to the sign of the cross made on the forehead, in baptism, and confirmation, and extreme unction, and to other rites in which the sign of the cross is so prominently used. However this may be, there can be no doubt that special pains have been taken to keep the followers of the Papal church distinct from all others. And they are taken yet. We see them not only in the sacraments of the church, but also in their separate schools and hospitals. These pains are taken by the Papal clergy. It is the clergy who administer the rites and sacraments; it is the clergy who lay upon the living and the dying the sign of the cross; it is the clergy whose influence keeps up the separation in educational and charitable institutions in every land. All this is symbolized with the utmost plainness by the fact that the second beast caused all to receive a mark.

But this is not all. The second beast prevented all those who had not received the mark from buying and selling. That is, all those who were not members of the Papal church and distinguished by the observance of its peculiar rites, were not suffered to engage in the ordinary pursuits of life. This has always been the case whenever and wherever the Papal clergy has had supreme power. It has been common for Rome to prohibit all traffic

with heretics. If it was necessary, canon after canon might be quoted, in which pope and council have commanded that no man should entertain heretics in his house, or give them the least assistance, or sell anything to them, or buy anything from them. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that no man could buy or sell who did not have the mark of the beast.

VIII. Let us now notice THE CONCLUDING ENIGMA, and see whether we can discover any plausible solution. "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six." The words, "here is wisdom," imply that it is no easy matter to discover the meaning of the verse which concludes this chapter. This, all the expositors of the Apocalypse have been ready enough to acknowledge. One of no small learning concludes his attempted exposition of this verse with the words, "I have not the slightest idea of its meaning." It therefore certainly becomes us to enter upon the explanation with modesty and diffidence. In order to prepare the way for a solution, a few things must be borne in mind. Let it be remembered that the Greeks did not use Arabic numerals, as we do, to represent numbers; they used the letters of the alphabet. Each letter represented a certain number. The first letter represented 1; the second, 2; the third, 3; the tenth, 10; the eleventh, 20; the twelfth, 30; the nineteenth, 100; the twentieth, 200, &c. Therefore, every Greek word could be represented by a number. Take, for example, the Greek word "thouth," one of the names of the god Mercury. *Th*, the first letter in the word, represents 9; *o*, the second letter, represents 800; *u*, the third letter, represents 400; *th*, the fourth letter, represents 9. Adding these together, thus,  $9 + 800 + 400 + 9$ , gives 1218. And the mystics speak of Mercury as 1218, because the numbers represented by the letters of his name, added together, make 1218. In like manner, they speak of Jupiter as 717, because the numbers represented by the letters of his name, added together, make 717. Many other examples might be given, but these are sufficient. If, then, we had any Greek name, we could very easily find the number which corresponds to it. All we would have to do would be to add together the numbers represented by its letters, and we would have the number of the whole name. But it is a far harder matter, when we have the number given to find the corresponding name, because the value of the letters of many different names, added together, may make the same number. And this is the enigma we have to solve in the present instance. We have the number, 666; what name is there, whose letters added together, will make this number? Let it also be remembered that we must look for some *Greek* name, for the Apocalypse was written in Greek. Let it also be remembered that this name is the name of a man, or class of men, for it is expressly said, "it is the number of a man."

These, then, are the elements given for the solution of this enigma. The name must be the name of a man or class of men. It must be a Greek name. The value of the letters of the name, added together, must be 666. What is the name? Many answers have been given to this question, but the one which most satisfactorily fulfills all the conditions is the Greek word "lateinos," that is, "the Latin one." *L*, represents 30; *α*, 1; *τ*, 300; *ε*, 5; *ι*, 10; *ν*, 50; *ο*, 70; *ς*, 200; and these sums, added together, make 666. And this is an appropriate name for the ecclesiastical power symbolized by the second beast. Its prayers are Latin; its canons are Latin; its breviary is Latin; its decrees are Latin; its bulls are Latin; its Scriptures are Latin; it worships in Latin; it prays in Latin; it curses in Latin; all is Latin. And while we may not speak with undue confidence, it does seem that the name of the beast or man, represented by the number 666, is "the Latin one."

As there is in every point such a resemblance between the second beast and the Papal clergy, we are brought to the conclusion that the second beast was designed by the Spirit of revelation to be a symbol of the Papal clergy.

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## LECTURE XXXVIII.

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### THE DURATION OF THE PAPAL POWER.

Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.—*Rev.* 13: 5.

WHAT is the meaning of the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, the forty-two months, the three years and a half, which are several times brought to our notice in the visions we have been considering? The passages in which this period of time is referred to, are as follows: 11: 2, 3; 12: 6, 14; 13: 5. A like period is referred to in Daniel 7: 25; 12: 7. These questions now present themselves: To what do these predictions refer? Do they refer to the same thing, or to different things? If they refer to the same thing, what period of time is here described? When does this period begin, and when does it end? These are the questions to which your attention is invited in the present lecture.

I. TO WHAT DO THESE PREDICTIONS REFER? Do they refer to the same thing, or to different things? In order to answer these questions, we must take up one by one the several passages which have just been cited, and reach a clear understanding of their meaning. And first we turn to Revelation 13: 5. "Power was given unto him to continue forty and

two months." The reference here is to the beast having seven heads and ten horns which the apostle saw rising out of the sea. Taking it for granted that this beast is the divinely appointed symbol of the Papal church, and that this chapter describes the origin and history of the Papal church, then this verse tells us that the Papal church is to continue forty-two months. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be forty-two months. Let us now turn to Revelation 12:6. "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." The woman is the divinely appointed symbol of the true church. According to the revelations of this chapter, the great enemy of the true church is the Papal church, symbolized as before by the beast with seven heads and ten horns. In the conflict between them, the true church was compelled to flee into the wilderness. That is, the true church was compelled to withdraw itself from prominent place in the world and to retire from notice; while the false church ruled openly in the earth. According to the verse under consideration, this retirement of the true church and this triumph of its enemy was to continue for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Therefore this passage, like the former one, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or forty-two months. Let us now turn to Revelation 12:14. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." This passage manifestly refers to the same events as the one last considered, viz., to the retirement of the true church and the triumph of the false church. According to the passage under consideration, this retirement and this triumph were to continue for a time, times, and a half. This means a year, two years, and a half a year. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of three and a half years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Let us now turn to Revelation 11:2. "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." In this vision, as in many of the visions of the Apocalypse, the holy city is a symbol of the true church. And, according to the passage before us, the true church is to be trodden under foot of the spiritual Gentiles for forty-two months. These spiritual Gentiles, the enemies of the true church, are the Papal church. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of forty-two months, or three and a half years, or one thousand two



hundred and sixty days, and during this period it would tread the true church under its feet. Let us now look at Rev. 11:3. "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." In this vision the two witnesses are a symbol of the true church. By this symbol, two things are shadowed forth. In the first place, it is shadowed forth that the true church is to be a witness, that is, to bear testimony for God. In the second place, it is shadowed forth that the members of the true church would be few in number. As, under the law of Moses, there must be at least two witnesses to establish any fact, so in the times here referred to there would be barely enough true Christians to keep alive on the earth a testimony for God. And according to the passage before us these few members of the true church were to prophesy in sackcloth, that is, to bear their testimony in sorrow. The reason of their sorrow is the persecutions of "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit." Therefore this passage, like the ones already referred to, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years, or forty-two months, and during that period the church would bear testimony for God in sackcloth and sorrow. Let us now turn to Dan. 7:25. "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." According to this vision, the Papal church, which is symbolized by the fourth beast, is to rule in triumph over the earth for "a time, and times, and the dividing of time." The word translated "time" describes any definite period of time. It may be a day, or a week, or a year. What definite period is described must be determined from the context and from parallel passages. And the parallel passages in the Apocalypse and in other places in the word of God convince us that the word in this connection means a year. According to this vision, then, the Papal church is to rule in triumph over the earth for a year, two years, and half a year; that is, for three years and a half. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that power to its fall, would be a period of three years and a half, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, and during that period the Papal church would devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces. Let us now turn to Dan. 12:7. "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." According to this vision, from the beginning to the end

of the wonders would be a time, times, and a half; that is, three and a half years. And the wonders here referred to are the triumphs of Antichrist. Therefore this passage, like the former ones, marks the duration of the Papal church. From the rise of that ecclesiastical power to its fall would be a period of three and a half years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, and during that period the holy people would be scattered, and at its end the wonders of Antichrist would be finished.

These are all the passages in the inspired word in which this period of forty-two months is referred to. From our review of these passages, two things are evident. In the first place, all these passages refer to the same thing. They are synonymous in meaning. What one describes, the other describes. They all describe the duration of the Papal power. In the second place, these passages all teach us that the Papal power is to continue on the earth for three and a half years, or forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

II. This brings us to the second point of inquiry, viz.: WHAT PERIOD OF TIME IS DESCRIBED BY THE THREE YEARS AND A HALF, or the forty-two months, or the one thousand two hundred and sixty days? If we can answer this question, we will know just how long the Papal power is to continue. Are the years, the months and the days here spoken of to be understood literally, or figuratively, or prophetically? It seems evident that they cannot be understood literally. The passages in which they occur are all symbolical. The beast with seven heads and ten horns, the woman clothed with the sun, the holy city, the two witnesses, and in fact everything described in these visions are symbols; and it would be absurd to suppose that the months alone were to be taken literally. And if they are not to be understood literally, how are they to be understood? On one occasion the prophet Ezekiel was commanded, as a sign to the house of Israel, to lie on his right side forty days. And there can be no question that this time was symbolical, for it is expressly said to him, *Ez. 4 : 6*, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." These words have always been regarded by those who have made prophecy a study, as expressing a general principle of prophetic interpretation. In other words, in prophetic visions and utterances, each day is regarded as the symbol of a literal year. The truth of this principle may be proven by many illustrations from the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Many predictions, having reference to the great kingdoms which have existed on the earth, have been fulfilled; and in these fulfilled predictions, it is seen that each day in vision stands for a literal year. It is not necessary to mention instances. All who have given the subject of prophecy any attention must know that it is a principle which is almost universally received by Biblical students,

that a day in prophecy is a symbol for a literal year. This principle is usually called the year-day theory. While some do not accept this theory, yet the weight of names and of argument is largely in its favor.

Taking, then, the truth of this theory for granted, the passages we have been considering teach us what is to be the duration of the Papal power. It is not to be three and a half literal years. It is to be three and a half prophetic years, that is, forty-two prophetic months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days. And if every prophetic day is a symbol of a literal year, then one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days would symbolize one thousand two hundred and sixty literal years. This is the period of time shadowed forth in the passages under consideration. From the rise of the Papal power to its fall is one thousand two hundred and sixty years. During this period the true church is to be opposed and persecuted by Antichrist, to live in the wilderness, and to bear testimony for God in sackcloth and sorrow; and during the same period the Papal church is to live, and triumph, and reign on the earth.

III. We have now a more difficult question to answer: WHEN DOES THIS PERIOD BEGIN, AND WHEN DOES IT END? If we can only determine when it begins, we will have no difficulty in determining when it ends, for the duration of the period is one thousand two hundred and sixty years. We have only to add one thousand two hundred and sixty to the year when the Papal church began, and we will have the year when that church will be destroyed. The question, then, before us is a very simple one in theory. It is only this: when did the Papal church begin? But practically this question is not an easy one to answer. The Papal system, as it has existed in the world for hundreds of years in the past, was of slow growth. It did not at once spring into existence, clothed with its full powers. As it is hard to say just when the evening twilight becomes darkness, so it is hard to say when the true church, founded by the Saviour and his apostles, was lost in the false church, symbolized by the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns.

There are several epochs in the history of the church which may be regarded as the beginning of the Papal system. Some expositors have regarded one of these epochs as the beginning; others have regarded another; therefore, some have fixed upon one year as the termination of the Papal power, and others have fixed upon another year. This is the way in which different years, as for example, 1793, 1848, 1866, and other years yet in the future, have been settled upon by various authors as the years in which the Roman Catholic church would be overthrown. The question before us is, when did the Papal system begin? While we may not be able to answer this question beyond the possibility of a doubt, we have as much right to attempt an answer as any one, and our answer is just as likely to be correct as that of others.

Before we attempt to answer this question, we must determine what the Papal system is. It is not mere ecclesiastical power; it is not the exercise of authority by pope, bishop, ministry or council, over the spiritual affairs of the church; it is not mere political power; it is not the exercise of authority by king, emperor, prince or congress, over the temporal affairs of the nations of the world. It is a union of the two—of ecclesiastical and temporal power; it is the exercise of authority, both in spiritual and temporal affairs. It is well known that the Papal church has claimed and exercised such authority during recent centuries. The pope, the head of that church, has claimed to be supreme in spiritual matters, and has ruled the church according to his pleasure. He has also claimed to be supreme in temporal matters; he has been a king among the kings of the earth, and he has deposed and exalted kings at his pleasure. The presbyters and bishops of the primitive church claimed authority in spiritual matters; but when did they begin to claim authority in temporal matters as well? If we can discover when the bishops of Rome began to exercise authority in both temporal and spiritual matters, we will at the same time discover when the Papal system began; for this union of ecclesiastical and temporal power is the very essence of Papacy as it is described in the visions of the inspired word. When did the exercise of this twofold authority begin? Some have answered this question by saying in the year 533. In that year the emperor Justinian openly and formally acknowledged the bishop of Rome to be the head of the church. There can be no doubt that by this decree of Justinian the Roman church was greatly strengthened; but it is evident that this acknowledgment that the bishop of Rome was the head of the church was no grant of temporal authority. There was not at this time that peculiar union of temporal and spiritual power which properly constitutes the Papacy. Others have fixed upon the year 606 as the time of the origin of the Papal system. In that year the emperor Phocas confirmed the grant of Justinian, and conferred upon Boniface III, who was then bishop of Rome, the title of universal bishop; but in this there was no grant of temporal authority—there was not that union of temporal and ecclesiastical power which properly constitutes the Papacy. Up to this time the bishop of Rome was ruler only over the spiritual affairs of the church. Others have fixed upon a later date as the time of the origin of the Papal power. In the conflict between claimants for the throne, Stephen, who was then pope or bishop of Rome, sided with Pepin, and when Pepin became emperor he gave the pope, as a reward for his services, that territory which was known as the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis. To this territory additions were made in subsequent centuries, until at last it grew into what are called the Papal States, or the States of the Church. This gift of the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis to pope Stephen was made about the year 752. The writer of the article, "Papal States," in the

*American Cyclopaedia*, says: "From this time the popes in all their proceedings assumed the style of temporal sovereigns." If this is correct, then we have discovered the beginning of the Papal system. From the time that the popes began to assume in all their proceedings the style of temporal sovereigns, there was that union of ecclesiastical and temporal authority which constitutes the Papacy. And this time, according to the facts of history which have been mentioned, was about the year 752. Other dates have been fixed upon as the time of the origin of the Papal system, but the ones mentioned are the principal ones. The year 538, when the pope was formally acknowledged as the head of the church; the year 606, when he was formally declared to be universal bishop, and the year 752, when the pope began to exercise temporal in connection with his spiritual authority. For the reasons which have been given, the last date seems to be the correct one; for then appears for the first time that union between temporal and spiritual authority which constitutes the great peculiarity of the Papal system.

If this is correct, we are prepared to answer the question, When will the Papal system come to an end? If it began in the year 752, and if it is to continue for one thousand two hundred and sixty years, then it is to be destroyed in the year 2012. We would not speak too confidently on this point—not because we have any doubts that these visions refer to the Papal church, or because we have any doubts that the forty-two months symbolize one thousand two hundred and sixty literal years, but because there is a question as to the exact time when the Papal system began. But if it began, as seems altogether most probable, about the year 752, when the popes "assumed in all their proceedings the style of temporal sovereigns," then it will be destroyed about the year 2012.

If these things are so, the Papal system is approaching its downfall. In less than one hundred and fifty years the time predicted in the Scriptures for the overthrow of the great anti-Christian church will come. Then the beast with seven heads and ten horns will be destroyed; the church will come forth from its retirement clothed in its robes of spotless purity; God's witnesses will lay aside their sackcloth and prophesy with joy; the holy city will no longer be trampled under foot by the spiritual Gentiles; the sinful wonders which have so long shaken the faith of the people of God will cease; the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of prophecy will come to an end. In the meantime there is work for us, and for all the followers of the Lord Jesus to do. God works out his plans through the instrumentality of his earthly church. We must stand up for the truth. We must resist every error and every enemy. The work is hard, the conflict is sore, but the victory is sure. God has spoken, and not one jot or tittle of his word will pass away till all be fulfilled. The one thousand two hundred and sixty years are approaching their termination, and we may lift up our heads, for the day of our redemption draweth nigh.

## LECTURE XXXIX.

## THE LAMB AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as a voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.—REV. 14: 1-5.

DARK and gloomy were the visions which had presented themselves to the apostle, and which we have recently considered. In them, the members of the true church were represented as few and persecuted, and the enemies of the true church as many and triumphant. We saw the great red dragon driving the crowned and beautiful woman to the wilderness, and following her with many dangers, as with floods of waters from his mouth. In this representation we saw the history of the true church shadowed forth during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years it lived in obscurity to hide from the persecutions of pagan and Papal Rome. We then saw a monster coming up from the sea with seven heads and ten horns, we heard his blasphemies, and we witnessed his power to overcome the saints and to make all those whose names were not written in the Lamb's book of life, fall down at his feet and worship him. In this representation, we saw shadowed forth the power of civil Rome, with its blasphemies, and its persecutions, and its world-wide dominion. We then saw another monster coming up out of the earth with the horns of a lamb and the voice of a dragon; we saw his power to work deceiving miracles, to make an image of the first beast and give it life and speech, to compel men to worship the beast and his image, to set a mark upon these worshippers, to prevent all those who had not received this mark from engaging in traffic and in the ordinary pursuits of life, and to kill them with the sword. In this representation, we saw shadowed forth the power of the Papal clergy, their influence in making men submit to the general councils of the Papal church, and their success in keeping the adherents of the Papal church separate from all other men.

Surely these visions are dark and gloomy to every one who loves the truth and the church of God. In these representations, and in several preceding ones, the true church seems to be just ready to give up the ghost.

The two witnesses clothed in sackcloth, the beautiful woman hiding for safety in the inaccessible wilderness, the saints overcome by the beast with seven heads and ten horns, those who refused to worship the image and receive its mark killed by the beast with the horns of a lamb and the voice of a dragon, all picture the church in the very extremity of adversity and dissolution. Surely, as John saw these representations, and understood their meaning, as he doubtless did, he would be cast down and would need to be encouraged. And as we study these representations, and trace their fulfillment in the history of the church and the world, we as lovers of the church must be cast down and must need to be encouraged. Is there no encouragement? Is there no brighter side to the picture? Is there no ray of light? There is encouragement; there is a brighter side; there is a ray of light. The apostle is permitted to look behind the heavenly vail and learn that the true church, though represented by the two witnesses with their garments of sackcloth, by the childless mother hiding in the wilderness, and by the conquered and slain saints, is safely kept by the divine power and love, and at last brought in triumph to its heavenly home. All this was revealed to the apostle, and it is by his inspired description revealed to us, in the vision of the Lamb and his followers upon mount Zion.

This change from the dark and gloomy to the bright and cheering is in accordance with the longings of the human mind, and with the practice of men in other matters. The mind cannot dwell long on any class of subjects without great weariness. It must be rested by change. Therefore the man of business must have his hours of relaxation; the student must now and then turn from his exhausting studies to lighter mental labor; our magazines place their learned essays side by side with works of fiction; our painters mingle light and shade with a skillful hand; our schools, our musical concerts and our public entertainments furnish variety; for the mind calls for variety and men obey the call. Such variety is to be found in the divine word. Precept and example, narrative and discourse, warning and promise, all blend together in this revelation of our God. We have had one striking illustration of this already in our exposition of the Apocalypse. After the first six seals had been broken, and war, and famine, and pestilence, and persecution, and political convulsions had gone forth, one after another, filling the world with sorrow, in the seventh chapter the apostle saw a vision which relieved the gloom, and bears a close resemblance to the vision we are now considering. He saw in the vision a great multitude of sealed ones, who were clothed in white robes, who had palms in their hands, and who cried with a loud voice, "salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." He was rested and comforted by the contemplation of the safety and happiness of this redeemed throng. So in the present instance, after the dangers and perse-

cutions of the earthly church had been foretold, and after the power and victories of the enemies of the earthly church had been described, the apostle is comforted and rested by a bright vision of heavenly safety and happiness. He sees the Lamb and his followers on mount Zion. That we may be comforted and rested after the gloomy subjects we have been considering in our recent lectures, let us strive to reach a clear understanding of this heavenly vision.

I. The first thing which attracts our notice is **THE LAMB**, the leader of the redeemed and worshipping multitude. "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb"; or rather, "and I looked, and, lo, the Lamb," for this is without question the true reading. Little fault can be found with the English version of the Bible. With the exception of a few obsolete words and incorrect renderings and awkward expressions, it is as near perfection as any work of man can be. But the translation of the latter part of the Apocalypse is more imperfect than that of any other portion of the Bible, and that through no fault of the translators. The way it came about was this: the New Testament was written in Greek, but very early in the Christian era it was translated into a goodly number of languages. These Greek copies of the New Testament and the several translations were, until the art of printing was discovered, preserved in manuscript. When Erasmus undertook, in 1516, to compile a complete Greek New Testament by comparing different copies and translations, he could find no Greek copy of the latter part of the Apocalypse. In all the Greek manuscripts which were then known, it was wanting. In order to make his Greek Testament complete, he had to take the Latin version of the latter part of the Apocalypse and translate it back into Greek. This Greek edition of the New Testament, which Erasmus thus prepared, was long regarded as the standard, and it is known among Biblical critics as "the received text." From this Greek edition, our English translation of the New Testament was made. It must be very evident that our version of the latter part of the Apocalypse is peculiarly liable to errors, for it is a translation of a translation of a translation of the Greek original. The Greek was first translated into Latin; the Latin was then translated into Greek by Erasmus, and the Greek was then translated into English by the translators of our authorized version. It would therefore be a wonder if it was not more imperfect than any other part of the New Testament.

But since the days of Erasmus, a number of early Greek manuscripts containing the Apocalypse have been discovered. Among these are two which, from their great age, accuracy and completeness are counted of the greatest value. The first is called the Alexandrian Codex. This manuscript, which is now in the British museum, was procured from the patriarch of Alexandria about two hundred and fifty years ago; and from this



fact it has derived its name. The other is called the Sinaitic Codex, because it was discovered in the convent of St. Catherine on mount Sinai, in the year 1844, by Tischendorf. After fifteen years of negotiations, it was purchased by the emperor of Russia in 1859, and it is now in St. Petersburg. From internal evidence the Alexandrian Codex appears to have been written about the year 450. The Sinaitic Codex appears to have been written about the year 350. These manuscripts, especially the latter, are of great value in correcting the received text. When we compare our translation of the latter part of the Apocalypse with these manuscripts, we find that in many places it is incorrect and imperfect. And there is no question among Biblical critics, that the reading of these manuscripts should be followed. It is true, the most of these variations do not make any change in the sense, but some of them are of considerable importance.

Let us return to our exposition. Our translation reads: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb"; but the improved reading of both the Alexandrian and Sinaitic manuscripts is, "And I looked, and, lo, the Lamb." This is without question correct. It was not merely *a* lamb which John saw; it was *the* Lamb of the previous visions, that stood in the midst of the throne, and was found worthy to open the seals; that fed the saints and led them to living fountains of water; that had written the names of his followers in his book of life, and promised them grace to overcome their foes. The Lamb so often mentioned in this book and so well known to every reader, needs no description. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

And this Lamb "stood on the mount Zion"; not upon the mount Zion on which the temple of the Jewish economy was builded, but upon the mount Zion which was in heaven. You will remember that in the celestial scenery which has been described, and which remains substantially unchanged through all the visions, there was, near the throne of God, a heavenly temple which stood upon the heavenly Zion. On this heavenly mountain, John saw the risen Saviour, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. What a contrast there is between this and the previous visions. In them, we saw the confusion, and bloodshed, and ungodliness of earth; in this, we see the peace, and happiness, and holiness of heaven. In them, we saw the dragon and his satanic works; in this, we see the Lamb and his followers.

II. Let us turn our attention to THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB. We will best bring out the full meaning of the inspired description, if we notice in their order these points: the number of the Lamb's followers, their mark, their worship, and their character.

1. With the Lamb on mount Zion were "an hundred forty and four thousand." Our attention was called to this mystical number in the vision

of chapter VII, in which we are told that twelve thousand were sealed out of each of the twelve tribes of Israel. This mystical number teaches us that all of God's saints will be brought home in safety at last, for twelve is the number of heavenly perfection. Not one of them will be lost. The full number of twelve times twelve thousand will be completed. This mystical number also teaches us that a great multitude, which no man can number, will be saved; for of course the mystical number is to be understood not as definite but as indefinite. The saints on earth at any period of the world's history are few. The church has ever been a little flock. It is fitly shadowed forth by the two witnesses, and by the lonely woman in the wilderness. But when the end will come and they will be gathered from all the lands, and will stand together on the heavenly Zion, they will constitute a great congregation, which is properly described by the mystical one hundred and forty-four thousand. Then let no saint give way to despair. There will not be a vacant throne, or an unemployed harp in heaven. Not one for whom these honors have been prepared will come short of entering into rest. Though the church at times may seem to be dead or dying, God never leaves himself without witnesses; and when these witnesses will all be gathered from land and sea, from continent and island, from north and south, and east and west, they will be the general assembly of the first born, whose voice of praise will be as the voice of many waters.

2. Let us notice *the mark* of the one hundred and forty-four thousand followers of the Lamb. They had "his Father's name written in their foreheads"; or, according to the improved reading of both the Alexandrian and Sinaitic manuscripts, they had "his name and his Father's name written in their foreheads." We are here reminded of the mark which the beast of the previous vision had set upon the right hand and the forehead of his followers, and of the significance of that mark. It was a sign by which they were to be distinguished from all others. So on the followers of the Lamb, there is to be a distinguishing mark. By their consistent profession, by their holy lives, by their observance of divinely appointed rites, by their Christ-like disposition, and by their heavenly home, they are separated from the world. By these marks, the Saviour knows his own; by these marks, they are recognized on earth, and distinguished from other men. And these marks will not be blotted out in heaven; for when they stand on the mount Zion, they will have the same characteristics they had on earth, only these characteristics will be brought to perfection. These marks are so plain that it is as if the names of the Lamb and his Father were written in their foreheads, names which indicate that they are the saved of the Lamb, and the children of the Father. Then let no saint give way to despair. First of all, let him inquire whether he carries the mark of the beast or the mark of the Lamb. If

he finds that he carries the name of the Lamb and his Father, that is, if he finds that he has the distinguishing characteristics of those who are the followers of the Lamb and the children of the Father, he may be sure that he will not be forgotten in the great gathering of the last day; for all who stand on mount Zion will have this mark in their foreheads, and all who have this mark on their foreheads will be on mount Zion.

8. Let us notice *the worship* of the followers of the Lamb. "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." Their worship was grand and earnest. It was not the listless and heartless worship which so often disgraces the earthly congregations of the saints. It fell upon the ears of the listening apostle, as it came rolling down from the slopes of the heavenly Zion, like the voice of many waters, or like the voice of a great thunder. John had often heard the booming of the wild waves of the Mediterranean as under the impulse of furious winds they dashed against the rocky shores of his island home; he had heard the thunder echoing from cloud to cloud, and making Patmos itself tremble with its reverberations; and now, when he heard the song of the redeemed, he could compare it to nothing he had ever heard on the earth save to the grand chorus of the waters and the thunders, when they unite in the praises of omnipotence.

Their worship was sweet and melodious. It was not the discordant worship which is so often heard on the earth. It fell upon the ears of the listening apostle like the strains of harpers harping with their harps. It had been his privilege, in his youth, to stand often in the courts of the temple at Jerusalem, and to hear the Levites, the sons of Asaph, touch their harps with skillful fingers in the worship prescribed by the ceremonial law; and now, when he heard the song of the redeemed, he could compare it to nothing he had ever heard on earth save to the sweet music of the trained worshipers in Jerusalem's temple, which had made such an impression upon his youthful heart, that the persecutions and labors of many years had not blotted it from his memory.

The song of the redeemed was a new song. What does this mean? That it was sung on a new occasion, in a new place, with new meaning, to celebrate a new and complete and eternal victory? It means all this, for the singers had reached heaven at last, and they were now, for the first time, rejoicing in their full redemption. But it means something more than this. It means that all earthly things become old; the fairest landscape, often looked upon, loses its beauty; the most exquisite melody, often heard, no longer pleases; the holiest exercise, often repeated, becomes a

weariness; but the song of the redeemed is sweet for ever. After millions of years have passed away, it will be as new as it was when it was first sung. And the redeemed were not ashamed of their worship. They sung their song before the throne, and the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders; that is, in the presence of God and of the great congregation of the heavenly sanctuary. They did not close their mouths because others were looking on, but with heart and voice they gave the glory of their salvation to him that sat upon the throne and to the Lamb.

The song of the redeemed was one which was peculiar to themselves. "No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." None but the redeemed can sing the song of redemption. None but those who have felt the burden and agony of sin, and the joy of deliverance through a personal Saviour can sing. "unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." The angels and the arch-angels must stand silently by while the redeemed engage in their worship, for their song, which is the fruit of the blessed experience of pardoned sin, none can learn save those who have been redeemed from the earth.

4. Let us notice *the character* of the followers of the Lamb. They are free from all defilement. "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins." It is not marriage which is here condemned, but defilement. The followers of the Lamb are not necessarily those who have kept themselves free from the marriage relation, but those who have kept themselves free from all uncleanness. The redeemed are also those "who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They follow him in the object of his life, in his intercourse with the world, in his joys, in his sorrows, and in his glory. They imitate his example, they obey his commandments, they follow him through evil report as well as through good report. The redeemed are also peculiarly acceptable to God. "These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." As, under the old economy, the first-fruits of the field were an acceptable offering, so in heaven, the redeemed are the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. The redeemed are also without guile and without fault. "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." They are not hypocrites; they are what they profess to be, the followers of the Lamb.

These are they who are the members of the heavenly congregation. They are they who keep themselves pure from the lusts of the flesh; who are willing to follow the Lamb always and everywhere; who are without guile and without fault. They are a pure, and obedient, and faultless congregation. Of course this does not mean that they were always such, but that through redeeming grace they have become such by washing their robes,

and chariots of fire, so that those who are for him are more than those who are against him. Then let no one who preaches the gospel, whether ordained minister, or Sabbath school teacher, or parent, or friend, grow faint-hearted, for the angels are his helpers.

The next thing which attracts our notice is the fact that this angel was flying in the midst of heaven, or rather in mid-air. This shadows forth the fact that the progress of the angel, or rather the progress of that which the angel symbolizes, is rapid and irresistible. Neither mountain, nor river, nor any earthly obstacle could hinder the angel in his flight; so nothing can hinder the onward progress of the gospel. Enemies might array themselves against it; devils and men might combine in persecuting its friends; but when the fullness of time has come, it will go through the world as if borne on angels' wings.

The next thing which attracts our attention is that which the angel carried. It was the gospel, the good news, the glad tidings. It was the same good news which the heavenly host proclaimed to the shepherds of Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will to men." It was the same good news which the Saviour and his apostles preached; the same good news which has been preached ever since, wherever the story of the cross has been told, whether in the wilderness, or in the cathedral, or in the chapel, or in the Sabbath school, or in the home; the same good news which has filled so many souls with everlasting joy; the same good news which in the future is to be published in every land and at every fireside. This gospel is the everlasting gospel. It took its rise in the eternal counsels of the Godhead; it remains unchanged through all the ages; it endures to the remotest end of eternity.

The next thing which attracts our attention is those to whom the angel brings the everlasting gospel. It is to them that dwell on the earth—to men of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. The gospel is not to be confined to the region about Jerusalem, or to any particular locality on the earth. Every continent and every island, every city and every hamlet, "from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand," shall hear the joyful sound; and the gospel will be preached to all classes of men, without reference to rank or race. Those who till the soil, and those who plow the deep; those who sit on thrones, and those who serve; those who are honored in the very centres of learning, and those whose studies are the desert and the forest, all shall listen with obedient hearts to the proclamation of the everlasting gospel.

The next thing which attracts our notice is the message of the gospel which the angel brings. In this message there is a threefold command and a reason why this command should be obeyed. The command is, "fear," "glorify," "worship" the one God, who is the creator of all things. The three parts of this command are so similar that they may be considered

together. The world worships many gods. In the patriarchal dispensation, during the time when the Jewish people constituted the true church, at the time when Christ came, through all the ages of the Christian era, the great mass of mankind were worshipers of idols. However much men differed from each other in the place of their residence and in the manner of their life, they were alike in this : they had lords many and gods many. And the great message which the gospel brings to men is, there is but one God, the Maker of the heavens, and the earth, and the seas, and he alone is to be feared, glorified and worshiped. He is to be feared because he is terrible ; he is to be glorified because he is exalted ; he is to be worshiped because he is divine. And the gospel does not stop here. It not only reveals the object of worship, but also the manner in which he is to be worshiped ; that is, through the atonement of Christ. Though the angel says nothing of the atonement in his message, the atonement is plainly implied in it ; for it is evident that no man can fear, or glorify, or worship God, unless he is acquainted with the plan of salvation through a crucified Saviour.

This is the angel's threefold command. The reason why this command should be obeyed is, "the hour of his judgment is come." The enemies of the Lord may enjoy—do enjoy—long seasons of prosperity ; but when the divine purposes are fulfilled, the Lord takes vengeance upon those who have turned his glory into shame, and his vengeance is terrible. Because his vengeance is certain and terrible, is the unanswerable reason why men should fear, and glorify, and worship him, for there is no other possible way of escape.

This is the vision of the angel of the everlasting gospel. What comfort it must have brought to the apostle ! In his previous visions he had seen the gospel hindered and restrained. Those who preached the gospel and those who believed the gospel were surrounded by powerful enemies, and they were put to death without mercy. They were but few in number. They were like the two witnesses clothed in sackcloth ; like the childless mother in the wilderness. But this vision revealed it unto him that the time was coming when this gospel would be everywhere proclaimed, its enemies would be judged, and its friends would fill the earth. What comfort this vision must bring to us ! The world is yet full of the habitations of horrid cruelty. Christian missions have as yet made only a few breaches in the walls of heathendom. Our prayers and our contributions seem to be in vain. The worshipers of idols, the followers of the false prophet, those who carry in their foreheads the mark of the beast, and all the other servants of Antichrist are crowding out the everlasting gospel from many of the fairest portions of the world. But it shall not be so always. The time is coming when the gospel shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It is true, the vision does not reveal to us the time when all this is to be ; but

it shall be, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. If John was comforted by this vision, we should be comforted still more, for the end is eighteen hundred years nearer than it was when he was in Patmos, and the angel of the everlasting gospel must even now be pluming his wings for carrying the glad tidings to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, that dwell upon the earth.

II. We have the vision of the angel who proclaimed **THE FALL OF BABYLON**. "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." In this vision we have the fall of Babylon, and the reason of its fall. The fall of Babylon is proclaimed in these words: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city." In the improved reading of the standard manuscripts, the word "city" is omitted. This clause would then be translated, "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great." However, this variation is not an important one, and I would not have mentioned it except for the fact that the improved reading indicates more clearly than our version does, that it is mystical and not literal Babylon, which is here referred to. Literal Babylon was a well known city on the banks of the river Euphrates. In the days of its pride it was the head of the heathen world and the great enemy of the true church. The Jews remembered it as the power which had invaded their land and laid their cities and the holy temple in ruins. They remembered it as the place where they had been captives, and where they had for seventy years hung their silent harps on the willows. To the Old Testament church Babylon was the emblem of all that was proud, oppressive and hostile. But what is meant by Babylon here and in other places in this book?—for this name occurs again and again in subsequent visions. It certainly cannot mean the literal Babylon of the Euphrates, for that city had fallen long before the days of John, and according to prophecy its glory was never again to be restored. It must therefore mean some power which resembled ancient Babylon, both in its characteristics and in the relation which it sustained to the true church. Such a power was Papal Rome. It was proud and oppressive; it was the head of all opposition to spiritual Israel; it was the great enemy of the true church. There is such a striking resemblance between Babylon and Rome, that Christians of all ages have regarded the former as the type of the latter, and have uniformly understood the name Babylon, wherever it occurs in this book, as referring to Rome. We are therefore to understand the angel as proclaiming the downfall of the great anti-Christian power of Rome. The words, "is fallen," are repeated to give the proclamation emphasis. It did seem, through the long ages of Papal supremacy, that Rome stood as firm as the seven hills upon which she sat. The greatest kings and the mightiest nations were her slaves. She held the hearts and consciences of

men in an iron grasp. To the poor, persecuted saints, who felt the weight of that power, there seemed to be no hope. To those who lived in that dark night, it seemed as if there was no promise of the morning. But the angel proclaims the joyful tidings that the time would come when the light would arise; when that power would be broken; when that iron grasp would be released; when the mystic Babylon, like her great type beside the Euphrates, would crumble into ruins, and when the glad news would be shouted from land to land, and from city to city, and from home to home, "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great."

The second thing in this vision is, the reason of Babylon's downfall. It is, "Because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Babylon is here represented, in accordance with the usual custom of sacred writers, as a female; and she is represented as a female of abandoned character, holding in her hand a cup of wine to allure and attract her lovers. This is an expressive figure by which to describe a corrupt city. The language we are now considering was probably suggested by the similar figure of Jeremiah 51:7, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." This figure is one which is familiar to every reader of the Bible. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Idolatry, or any unfaithfulness to God, is represented as spiritual adultery. The mystical Babylon was guilty of such idolatry and unfaithfulness. Therefore, she is pictured as holding in her hand the wine of fornication. By this wine she had made the nations drunk. This cup of fornication was one which called down upon those who drank of it the wrath of God. Therefore it is said to be the wine of the wrath of fornication.

All this figurative representation is fulfilled in Rome. She was guilty of idolatry and unfaithfulness, and all manner of spiritual uncleanness. Through her influence, the nations of the earth were led to commit all the sins of which she was guilty. These sins called down the wrath of God, and though that wrath was long delayed, it came at last like a fearful storm. All this is shadowed forth by the proclamation of the second angel.

All this must have brought comfort to the apostle. The great enemy of the church, whose rise, and progress, and triumph he had witnessed in the vision, would be overthrown. And all this must bring comfort to us, for it points to the time when the Lord's righteous indignation will be revealed against the idolatrous nations, and against her who has ever been their great tempter, and when the intoxicating wine of spiritual adultery will be known on earth no more for ever. It is true, the vision does not reveal to us the time when this shall be, but it shall be, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; and we may be sure that that time is eighteen hundred years nearer than it was when John heard the proclamation.



III. We have the vision of the angel who proclaimed THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WORSHIPERS OF THE BEAST. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." In this vision we have described, first, the persons to be punished, and then the punishment which was to be inflicted upon them.

The persons to be punished are those who worship the beast and who receive his mark on their hand or on their forehead. Of them little need be said in the present connection, for they have been described in a previous lecture. The beast is the great Roman power. This church sets a mark upon all its members, that is, by its peculiar rites and ceremonies, it draws a broad line of separation between them and other men. And now the third angel proclaims that all those who are thus marked are to be visited with divine punishment. There is, therefore, a very important difference between this vision and the preceding one. The preceding vision foretold the overthrow of the church of Rome, considered as the great anti-Christian power; this vision foretells the punishment of all the individual members of that church. The former predicts the overthrow of the city of Babylon; the latter predicts the destruction of the inhabitants of that city.

Of course I would not have you understand me as teaching here, or as having taught in any of my former lectures, that there are not now, or that there never have been any true Christians in the church of Rome. On the contrary, I believe that in the general assembly and church of the first born, there will be some who will be saved in spite of the corruptions of that corrupt church. History has preserved the names of some who were distinguished for their true faith and holy lives; and we may well believe that there were many whose names have not been preserved. In our own days, the doctrines and practices of those who call themselves "old catholics," show that there are some who, in the judgment of true charity, must be regarded as heirs of salvation. But they are few, and they always have been few in comparison with the hundreds of thousands who worshiped the beast; so few that if they were all removed they would hardly be missed in the great multitude. And it is to the great multitude, and not to the few exceptions, that the proclamation of the angel refers.

Their punishment is described as drinking of the wine of the wrath of God. The figure seems to be that of the executioner, compelling the

condemned prisoner to drink poison. The wrath of God is deadly poison. Those who drink it must die, and die in terrible agony. His enemies must drink it, for he is omnipotent, and no one can dash the cup from his hand. By this figure, the punishment of the wicked is often described in the inspired Scriptures. The cup of the Lord is a cup of astonishment, a cup of trembling, a cup of fury, a cup of red wine. In the present instance, the angel proclaims that the worshipers of the beast shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. This punishment will be without mercy or mitigation. It is "poured out without mixture" into the cup of his indignation. The wine of his wrath will not be diluted; it will be poured out in its full strength. When we remember how sore are the punishments of God, even when mingled with mercy, as they generally are in the present life, how much sorer will they be when they are poured out without mercy!

This punishment will be severe. The worshipers of the beast "shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." Certainly this is not to be understood literally. Like the wine of the wrath of God, it is a figure; and it is a figure which is full of meaning. The imagery is borrowed from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose burning is regarded as a symbol of the punishment of the wicked. Therefore, throughout the Scriptures, the enemies of God are represented, after death, as being tormented with fire and brimstone. This figurative language describes a severe punishment. We cannot conceive a sorer punishment than that which fell upon the cities of the plain; we cannot conceive of a more horrible death than one which comes through fire and brimstone. If the worshipers of the beast are to be punished as with fire and brimstone, their punishment will be severe. And the fact that their punishment is in the presence of the angels and of the Lamb increases its severity. When the punished look upon the joy of the holy angels which they might have shared, and upon the Lamb whom they slighted and rejected, it will multiply their agony and augment their suffering.

Still further, their punishment will be eternal. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." The words "for ever and ever" point to a duration which has no end. Men may try to explain away their obvious meaning, but how can eternity be better described than by the words "for ever and ever," and by the similar expressions which are to be found elsewhere in the Scriptures? The smoke ascending for ever, points to a punishment which has no end.

But this is not all. Their punishment will be unceasing. "They have no rest day nor night." What a contrast do these words suggest between the punishments of the present and those of the future! Here rest comes now and then to the sufferer. The prisoner in his cell, the slave in his

toils, the mourner in his sorrow, the sick in his weariness, all forget their suffering in the blessed sleep which God gives to lighten our burdens. There can be no earthly pain which will not sooner or later find relief, either in the luxury of sleep or in the rest of the grave. The bitterest ingredient in the punishment of the future is, that it will know no rest. There will be no sleep with its moments of forgetfulness; there will be no grave with its dreamless slumber. And yet there are men who dread every form of bodily suffering, but they are willing to go down without a fear and without a shudder to the unceasing suffering of eternity.

All this must have brought comfort to the apostle, and it must bring comfort to us, if we are friends of God. The enemies of God and of his church, however powerful they may be now, will be punished. It is not revealed in the vision when this punishment will begin, but it will begin, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and its beginning is eighteen hundred years nearer than when the seer of Patmos saw his vision.

IV. In the last place, we have THE EXHORTATION TO PATIENCE till these visions are fulfilled. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus", or rather, according to the improved reading, which is decidedly to be preferred, "here is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." The saints are here described by their two great and unfailing characteristics. They are those who have faith in Christ, and who show their faith by holy obedience to the commandments of God. Such obedient and believing saints will be brought out of their great tribulations at last, but they must wait, wait till their enemies have filled their cup of wrath to the brim, wait till their enemies are punished, wait till the purposes of God are accomplished. This they are willing to do, for they have unbounded confidence in the wisdom, and love, and power of their God. Here is the patience of the saints, a patience which has been manifested in all the centuries of the past, which is being manifested now, and which will continue to be manifested till the Lord is revealed from heaven. Such patient waiting will be rewarded, for it will see the gospel preached to every nation under the heaven, Babylon overthrown, and the enemies of God destroyed.

We may not conclude without warning all against exposing themselves to the wrath of God, which has been revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. These words should ring in the ears of every impenitent one till they bring him to the cross: "The enemies of God shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation."

## LECTURE XLI.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE BELIEVING DEAD—THE FINAL  
HARVEST—THE LAST VINTAGE.

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. —REV. 14: 18-20.

LISTEN to the words of Isaiah's vision, and place them in contrast with the words which begin the subject of the present lecture: "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Now listen to John's record: "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." The prophet's vision was from the earth; the apostle's was from heaven. The prophet was commanded to cry; the apostle was commanded to write, as if his revelation was more important and more permanent. The prophet's language proclaims the mortality of the living; the apostle's language proclaims the immortality and blessedness of the dead. The prophet's words point only to the grave; the apostle's words point to the rest which is beyond. And let it be remembered that this revelation to the apostle, like all the other revelations of this chapter, was designed to comfort him in view of the dark and gloomy visions he had already seen, and which he was yet to see. Remembering this, let us turn to the consideration of the blessedness of the faithful dead.

I. In the revelation of THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE FAITHFUL DEAD, which is contained in verse 13, there are two main points which claim our attention, viz: Who are blessed? And wherein does their blessedness consist?

1. *Who are blessed?* The dead who die in the Lord. It must not be overlooked that they are declared blessed, not by John or by any mere man, who may be deceived or mistaken. Nor are they declared blessed by any of the holy angels, who were permitted to reveal the destruction of God's enemies and the great harvest and vintage at the end of the world. The blessedness of the believing dead is declared by a voice from heaven, as if from the throne of the Highest, a voice which the Holy Spirit tells us is "yea and amen." The words which this voice uttered were to be recorded for the permanent instruction and comfort of the church through all the ages of its history. We might think the living, and those who were in the enjoyment of the full vigor of health happy, but this voice from heaven reveals the fact that the dead are blessed. How can this be? Nothing is more unnatural or sorrowful than death. Death puts an end to the joys of the present life. It removes our friends from us and us from our friends. It brings tears to our eyes, loneliness to our homes, and anguish to our hearts. It opens the door to the cold and cheerless grave, and then, after the precious dust has been laid therein, it shuts and locks the door for ever. How then can it be true that the dead are blessed? Because death puts an end to the sorrows and persecutions and sufferings of the present; because in the grave the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Believing all this, we might feel that it would be a blessed thing to die. But this is not what the voice from heaven teaches. It does not proclaim the blessedness of all the dead. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." The Scriptures never pronounce the wicked who die in their sins blessed or happy. The religion of the New Testament carefully guards this point, and declares with unmistakable plainness that only those dead are blessed who die in the Lord. What is it to die in the Lord?

There are three expressions to describe the different relations which men sustain to the Saviour. They may be "without Christ," that is, in a state of nature; they may be "in Christ," that is, in a state of grace; they may be "with Christ," that is, in a state of glory. In one or other of these conditions every man must be. He must be either without Christ, or in Christ, or with Christ. These expressions, when placed side by side, will help us to understand what is meant by the phrase, "in Christ." To be in Christ is to have some proper sense of our sinfulness, to accept Christ as our Saviour, and to rest upon him alone for salvation; to be in Christ is to be united to him by a living faith, a tie which nothing—not even death itself—can break. Therefore the expression, "in Christ," means something more than to follow Christ. The antediluvian sinner might have

followed the ark by swimming after it; he might have buffeted the waves for hours; but only those who were in the ark were saved. A manslayer might be near the city of refuge; he might be able almost to touch its gates; but only those who were in the city were safe. So a man may follow Christ; but if he would be saved, he must be in Christ. And those who are thus in Christ will live in Christ; that is, they will show by their thoughts, and words, and actions, that they are one with Christ. And those who thus live in Christ will die in Christ, and be partakers of the blessedness which is here promised. This is the only way by which such a blessed death can be reached. Life in the Lord must always precede death in the Lord; and death in the Lord must always follow life in the Lord. I may not, I cannot set any limits to the duration of that life. It may be for many years of faithful labor, like the life of John the beloved; or it may be for only an hour or two, like the life of the penitent thief on the cross. But if a man would die in the Lord, he must first, for a longer or a shorter period, live in the Lord. It is not merely or mainly a man's dying experience which gives comfort and hope, but his manner of life. We often manifest too great anxiety to know how our friends may have died, and to hear what their dying testimony was. If we would reach true comfort, the question is not, How did he die?—but How did he live? For those who live in the Lord, be their divine life long or short, will die in the Lord; and those who die in the Lord will inherit blessedness. If we would experience a blessed death, we must in life become united to Christ by a living faith.

The voice from heaven also proclaims "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth." These words, "from henceforth," have been explained in many different ways. Though I would not speak positively, the best explanation seems to be the one suggested by our version. All those who died in the Lord from that time forward were to be peculiarly blessed. Of course this does not mean that those who died in the Lord before that time were not blessed. All such dead, at their death, at once entered into glory. It means that those who died in the Lord from that time forward were peculiarly blessed. Wherein does their peculiar blessedness consist? It consists, in the first place, in this: under the gospel dispensation there are clearer revelations of the way of life and immortality than ever before. We understand, far better than the prophets and patriarchs did, how God can be just and the justifier of the believer. We understand, far better than they did, what God has in store for them that love him. Therefore, with greater confidence and joy than they, we can go down to meet the king of terrors. But this proclamation of blessedness, "from henceforth," points especially to the long period of sore persecution upon which the church was then entering. The saints would find little pleasure in life. They would be driven from their homes; they would be

fugitives in the wilderness; they would be hunted upon the mountains; they would be cast into prison; they would be daily exposed to death in its most cruel forms. While such sore persecutions surrounded them, it would be better to die than to live; it would be more blessed to go home to glory than to remain on earth, where were fightings without and fears within. And to this day, those who have experienced the bitterness of life's trials and the malignity of Satan's temptations, are able to say, "I am ready to depart"; "to depart and be with Christ is far better." Blessed are they who live in the gospel dispensation, the "henceforth" of which the voice from heaven spake. Their privileges are greater, their revelations are clearer, their death is easier, than were those of patriarchs and prophets. In them has been fulfilled the proclamation which John heard on Patmos, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth."

2. These, then, are the blessed. They are all the dead who die in the Lord, but especially those who die under the gospel dispensation. It was a voice from heaven which proclaimed their blessedness. By whom that voice was uttered, we are not informed; nor is it a matter of importance, for this voice was endorsed and confirmed by the Spirit: "Yea, saith the Spirit." *Wherein does their blessedness consist?* They are blessed in immortal life, for death shall never touch them more. They are blessed in eternal happiness, for all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes. They are blessed in freedom from condemnation, for 'who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? They are blessed in the society of the saints, for they join the general assembly and church of the first-born, and meet again with the loved ones who have gone before. They are blessed in the fellowship of the Saviour, for they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Only two elements of their blessedness are, in the words we are now considering, thought worthy of special mention. The first is, "they rest from their labors." This life is a life of toil. Labor with the head or hand is the universal law of this world. From the beginning, when it was said, "in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," to the end of the present order of things, dwellers on the earth must live under the dispensation of work. We must labor to supply the bodily, and mental, and spiritual wants of ourselves and others. No sooner is one task finished than another calls for our attention. Every morning brings its own labors, and every evening its own weariness. Is it any wonder that the weary workers on the earth long for rest? And is it any wonder that the word of God meets this longing by revealing heaven as a place of rest? "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God," where "they may rest from their labors." But these revelations do not mean that the heavenly state will be one of idleness. The redeemed will have their employments; though what their employments will be, we cannot say, except that in

everything they will glorify and enjoy the Lord. But though the redeemed rest not day nor night in their heavenly employments, they will know no fatigue or weariness. Therefore, it can be said of them, that they rest from their labors. This revelation of the blessedness of heaven falls like a benediction upon our bodies and souls, weary and worn with the ceaseless toils of the present existence.

The second element of their blessedness which has been thought worthy of special mention is, "their works do follow them." That is, the rewards or consequences of their works will accompany them to heaven, and stand by their side before the throne of judgment. This truth is taught in many places in the word of God. In the Saviour's description of the judgment, he tells us that the Judge will say to those in his presence, "inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me"; "inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." The same divine lips counsel us to "make for ourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail they may receive us into everlasting habitations." And we are told again and again, that on that day every man will be judged "according to the deeds done in the body," "according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil." These passages do not teach us that our deeds will be the ground of our acquittal or condemnation, but that they will be the witnesses and evidences of our faith or unbelief, according as they are good or evil. This is the province of good works. A man cannot take with him to eternity his gold, or his silver, or his lands; all he can take will be his character, which is the result of his conduct here. It is well for us to remember that in this respect our future life is only the prolongation of the present life. Our works, whether they are good or evil, will follow us, and they will color our whole existence to the remotest period of eternity.

This revelation was designed to comfort the apostle, and it is designed to comfort us. In the midst of the persecutions, and labors, and weariness of this life, we know that there remaineth a rest beyond. Why should we be afraid to die? We may forget the bitterness and agony of death when we remember the blessedness into which it ushers the departing soul. This voice of God has sounded down through the centuries, comforting unnumbered hearts, wiping tears from unnumbered eyes, sustaining unnumbered dying saints, and throwing the light of immortality into unnumbered graves: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." God grant that this blessedness may be ours, and that we may be found worthy to have these words pronounced over our sleeping dust.

II. We have the vision of THE FINAL HARVEST. "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of



man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap : for the time is come for thee to reap ; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped." In this vision, we have described the reaper, the command to reap, and the reaping. The end of the world is so often described under the figure of a harvest, and this figure is so familiar to us all, that it will require little explanation.

1. *The reaper* is the Son of man, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to go forth at the end of time to close up the affairs of the world. In gathering the ripened sheaves for the garner of heaven, he will employ the instrumentality of the angels ; for we are told in the parable that " the reapers are the angels." But it will all be done at his command and by his direction ; therefore, it is correct to represent him as the reaper in the final harvest. He shall come that day on a cloud of dazzling whiteness. This accords with other passages of Scripture. The Saviour himself says, " hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." On the mount of Olivet the angels said to the disciples, who had seen the Saviour ascend in the cloud, " this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Paul tells us that those who are alive on that day, " shall be caught up with them in the clouds." And in this book we are told " behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." In accordance with these representations, he appeared to John in this vision. He looked, and saw a white cloud, and on the cloud one sat like the Son of man. He who sat on the cloud had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand ; for on that day the Lord Jesus will appear, not as a prophet to instruct his people, not as a priest to make atonement for them, but as a king to gather them to himself and to rule over them for ever. As a symbol of this, he carries in his hand a sickle with which to reap the spiritual harvest, and wears on his head the crown of universal authority.

2. In the next place, we have *the command* to reap. This command was delivered by an angel, but it was not the angel's command. He came out of the temple which was in heaven ; that is, he came out from the immediate presence of God. Therefore, we are to understand this command to be the command of God. It is God the Father who gives the Son authority to reap the harvest of the world. It is God the Father who announces that the harvest of the world is ripe, and that the time for reaping has come. This accords with other passages of Scripture. Christ as Mediator is subject to the Father. It is the Father who has made him head over all things for the church. Of the day and the hour when the Son is to come to reap the harvest of the world knoweth no man, not even

the angels in heaven, but only those to whom the Father reveals it. It is therefore in harmony with other Scripture to represent the Father as announcing that the final harvest was ripe, and as commanding the Son to go forth and reap.

3. Then follows *the reaping*. The Son thrusts in his sickle, and the earth is reaped. It is, however, to be noted that there is an important difference between this vision and the Saviour's parable of the sower. Nothing is here said of the tares which are to be gathered and burned; the wheat only is referred to. Or dropping the figure, the event we are now considering refers only to the saints and their final entrance into happiness. The fate and punishment of the wicked are described in the next vision.

This vision of the harvest, like all the other visions of this chapter, was designed to comfort the apostle, and it is designed to comfort us. The righteous may suffer from persecution, and from various forms of evil, but there is in the future a glorious deliverance. When the harvest of the world is fully ripe, the great reaper will go forth, and gathering all his sheaves, return with joy, bringing them to the garner of his God.

III. We have the vision of THE FINAL VINTAGE. "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Let it be remembered that while the former vision represents the final gathering and reward of the righteous, this vision represents the final gathering and punishment of the wicked. The parts of these two visions correspond with each other.

1. In the first place, there is *the harvester*. In the former vision, the Son of man gathers the ripened grain; in this vision, an angel gathers the ripened grapes. This indicates that the Saviour will take a direct and active part in bringing the righteous to their everlasting home; but that he will commission his angels to bring the wicked to their eternal punishment.

2. There is *the command*. In the former vision, the command was given by an angel who came out from the heavenly temple; in this vision, the command is given by an angel who comes from the heavenly altar. This angel was one who had power or authority over fire. Fire is

an emblem of judgment. The fire upon the altar, by which the sacrifices were consumed, was a constant reminder of the wrath of God, which the sacrifices were designed to appease. The fact that this command was given by the angel from the altar's side, who had authority over fire, indicates that this vision was to be one of judgment and wrath. The commands in the two visions are similar. Both assert that the harvest is ripe, and both enjoin the immediate thrusting in of the sickle. The only difference between them is, the former refers to the ripened grain, which is to be gathered into the garner of God; the latter refers to the ripened grapes, which are to be cast into the wine-press of wrath.

3. We have *the harvest*. The grapes were gathered, cast into the wine-press and trodden without the city. The treading of the wine-press is a well known and expressive emblem of vengeance. In proof of this, I need only refer to that beautiful passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, in which the question is asked of the victorious Messiah, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel and thy garment like him that treadeth in the wine-fat"? His reply is, "I have trodden the wine-press alone; their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and will stain all my raiment, for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." This quotation explains the vision we are now considering, the vision in which the final punishment of the wicked is described as a treading of the wine-press. The greatness of the destruction is represented by the amount of the blood of the grape which flowed from the wine-press. It formed a great lake, sixteen hundred furlongs, or two hundred miles in length and breadth, and so deep that it came up to the bridles of the horses. Some have supposed that the space of two hundred miles was chosen because this was about the length of ancient Palestine; but it seems more probable that this space was chosen simply to indicate that the destruction would be very great. Let us try to realize in some proper manner the symbols of this vision. The angel with his sharp sickle gathers the ripened grapes and casts them into the wine-press. When the wine-press is trodden, the wine flows out till it forms a great lake two hundred miles across, and so deep that horses can hardly ford it. What a fearful picture do these symbols shadow forth! Still this representation of the future punishment of the wicked is no more fearful than many others contained in the word of God. God grant that none of us may ever know from experience what this fearful punishment means.

This vision, like the other visions of this chapter, was designed to comfort the apostle, and to comfort us. Surely, if we are bringing forth the fruits meet for repentance, we may look forward to the final harvest with joy and confidence.

In this chapter, then, there are seven comforting visions: 1. The Lamb and his followers. 2. The angel of the everlasting gospel. 3. The angel

who proclaimed the downfall of Babylon. 4. The angel who proclaimed the destruction of the worshipers of the beast. 5. The blessedness of the faithful dead. 6. The final harvest. 7. The final vintage. Gathering up the comfort which these visions are designed to impart, we will be prepared for the dark and gloomy visions we are yet to consider, and for bearing up under all the various trials of our earthly pilgrimage. With our eyes fixed upon the blessedness of the believing dead, and upon the recompense of the eternal future, we can manifest the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

## LECTURE XLII.

### PREPARATION FOR POURING OUT THE SEVEN VIALS.

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.—REV. 15:1-8.

WE now begin the consideration of the pouring out of the seven vials upon the earth. In order to get a clear understanding of this vision, let us, by a brief review, determine the position which it occupies in this book. The first thing in that part of the Apocalypse which relates to the future was the opening of the seals. The symbols which appeared under the opening of the first six seals shadowed forth the prominent events in the history of the world until the fifth century of the Christian era. When the seventh seal was opened, seven angels appeared and began to blow the seven trumpets which had been given to them. The symbols which appeared under the first six trumpets shadowed forth the prominent events in the history of the world from the fifth century until the rise of the Turkish power, and the Reformation of the sixteenth century. When the

seventh trumpet was sounded, the history of the centuries between the Reformation and the end of the present order of things is summed up in the concluding verses of chapter XI. Then there follows a new series of visions, designed to shadow forth the history of the church, as the former series was designed to shadow forth the history of the world. In this new series, we have the church represented under the emblem of a beautiful woman, who was compelled to hide childless and alone in the wilderness; and the enemies of the church represented under the emblems of monsters of great power and frightful appearance. After these representations, there were visions which were designed to comfort and cheer the apostle. After these cheering visions, which are introduced as an interlude, and which do not in the least hasten the grand consummation towards which the main incidents in this book are tending, we have the vision of the seven vials, upon whose consideration we enter in the present lecture.

This vision is, I believe, a development of the seventh trumpet. As the seven trumpets were a development of the last seal, so the seven vials are a development of the last trumpet; that is, the vials represent in greater detail the events which are briefly described under the seventh trumpet. In other words, the vision of the vials takes up the history of the church about the time of the Reformation and carries it on to the end of the world. Let this be borne in mind, for if this theory is correct, it will help us to understand the symbols which will be made to pass before our eyes. We will have to look for their fulfillment between the Reformation and the end of the world—in the very centuries in which we live.

In the subject of the present lecture, we have the introduction to the vision of the seven vials. We have the preparation for the final judgment on the beast, on his image and on his worshipers. We see the angels who are to execute this judgment. We see the golden vials full of wrath. We see these vials put into the hands of the angels. We hear the command given to them to go forth and perform their work. We see all things getting ready for the manifestation of the divine indignation. The scene of this introductory vision is the same as that of the previous visions. It is the celestial plain on which the throne of God stood, on which the four beasts and the four and twenty elders and the redeemed multitude and the angelic host were gathered, and on which the heavenly temple was builded. In this vision, there are three points to be considered: the new wonder in heaven; the song of those who, in former days, had gained the victory over the beast; and the final arrangements for executing the wrath of God. To these points we will turn our attention. Though this introductory vision is not so intensely interesting as some we have considered or as some which wait for consideration, for it does not materially hasten the grand catastrophe, yet it is important as it prepares the way for a clear understanding of the following chapter. Let us, then, endeavor to get it clearly and vividly impressed upon our minds.

I. We have to consider THE NEW WONDER which appeared in heaven. "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues ; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." That which John saw was a "sign," an emblem of events which were to occur in the world. It was a sign in heaven, for John had been taken in Spirit to heaven, and from this heavenly standpoint, he saw all the events which are contained in this book. It was a sign which was "great and marvelous." The events which it shadowed forth were such as would astonish and awe every looker on. Before we finish our exposition of the following chapter, it will be seen that this description is fully met. The symbols which succeed one another as vial after vial is poured out, and the events which these symbols shadow forth are well calculated to fill the mind with astonishment. This great and marvelous sign was seven angels, having the seven last plagues. Whether these were the same seven angels who had sounded the seven trumpets, we are not informed, nor is it important to know. They were the angels of God, and what they did, they did by the command of God. The word translated "plagues" literally means "blows" or "stripes," and it is frequently translated in this way in the New Testament, as for example, where it is said that the servant who knew his Lord's will and did it not should be beaten with many stripes. But the word has the secondary meaning of "calamity" or "punishment." This is, without question, its meaning here. The plagues which the angels had and which they were to be instrumental in inflicting, were calamities or punishments which God would send upon the beast and his followers. And they were the last plagues ; that is, the final calamities which would terminate the power and existence of the beast and his anti-Christian system. "In them is filled up the wrath of God." These calamities were to be the full expression of the divine wrath. When they were inflicted upon the beast, the divine wrath would be exhausted and ended, for by them the beast would be utterly overthrown and destroyed.

This was the new sign which John saw in heaven, a sign which shadowed forth great and marvelous calamities, which were to be inflicted on the beast by the instrumentality of the angels, and which would be the full and final expression of the divine wrath against that anti-Christian power.

II. We now pass to notice THE SONG of those who, in former days, had gained the victory over the beast. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true

are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

The persons who sing this song are clearly described. They are those who had obtained the victory over the beast, and his image, and the number of his name; for in the improved reading of the standard manuscripts the words, "and over his mark," are omitted. And they should be omitted; for the mark of the beast was either the image of the beast or his name, and not something different from them, as is implied in our version. The symbol of the beast has already been explained. It symbolizes the great anti-Christian power of Rome. Its image represents the general councils of the Papal church, which the dwellers on the earth were required to obey, and which put to death all who dared to disobey. The name of the beast is the name by which it was known, and which was represented by the number 666. All these things have been explained in previous lectures. It is well known that that anti-Christian power, during the centuries which preceded the time supposed to be referred to in the present vision, ruled over the world with a rod of iron. The inhabitants of every land acknowledged its authority. However, there were a few exceptions, so few that they are represented by the two witnesses in sackcloth, and by the childless mother in the wilderness. If we examine carefully the history of the middle ages, we will find traces of true saints. There were the Albigenses, and the Waldenses, and the Bohemians, and the Lollards, and a few others scattered here and there through the cities of the world. History has recorded the names of some who were distinguished for piety and holiness; and we have reason to believe that there were others whose names have long since been forgotten. These few saints would not worship the beast. They would not carry his mark by which his followers were distinguished from other men. Therefore they were persecuted. Racks were builded to torture them; fires were kindled to consume them; swords were sharpened to drink their blood; but they could not be conquered. Neither threatenings, nor persecutions, nor death itself, could make them yield. By faith in Jesus they obtained the victory over the world and the beast. It is true, many of them were killed, but they were none the less victors. They triumphed, even in death, over death and over their enemies, and in heaven they wear the crowns of triumph.

These are the victors over the beast, and his image, and the number of his name, who are here spoken of. When they saw that the divine wrath was about to be poured out upon the beast, and that their great enemy, and the great enemy of the church and the Saviour was about to be overthrown, is it any wonder that they sang a song of victory, which made all heaven echo again with its joyful strains? These victors, while they sang, stood upon the sea of glass. This crystal sea was brought to our notice in chapter

IV of this book. From the description there given, it appears that the celestial plain, on which the throne of God was set, was level, and firm, and clear, and beautiful, like a sea of glass. It was on this crystal pavement, before the throne, that the victors stood. But this pavement was not now as clear as it was in the vision of chapter IV. It was colored with red, as if it had been tinged with the reflection of fire. This leads us to expect that the coming vision will not be one of unmixed mercy, but one of mercy mingled with wrath. These victors, who stood on the crystal sea which was even then reddening with the glow of approaching wrath, had in their hands the harps of God. God provides everything for his glorified saints. When they enter heaven they will find their thrones, their crowns, and their spotless robes waiting for their coming. What a contrast there is between the present and the past of these heavenly worshipers! On earth their harps were silent; their tears and lamentations were many; their songs of thanksgiving were few; but now all tears have been wiped away from their eyes, and they rejoice with exceeding joy. When they had once tasted that fullness of joy, they must have counted the chastisements of earth as light afflictions which were but for a moment.

The song which they sang is described as "the song of Moses and the Lamb." "The song of Moses"! These words carry us back to Israel's deliverance from their Egyptian pursuers. The Israelites had crossed the Red sea, they stood in safety on the further shore, the waves of the sea had returned to their former place, the hosts of Pharaoh had all been swallowed up in a sudden and terrible destruction, and Moses and his followers lifted up their voices and sang of the love and power of their God. So these victors had experienced a great deliverance. They had escaped from a bondage worse than that of Egypt; they had been pursued by enemies more cruel and powerful than the hosts of Pharaoh; they had passed through a sea more terrible than that which laved the sands of Arabia, even the sea of death, whose freezing waters chill the body and affright the soul; they stood on the blessed shores of immortality, and looked down upon their enemies involved in the fearful plagues of God; therefore, like Moses and the Israelites, they lifted up their voices in song, but it was a song grander than literal Israel ever knew, for it celebrated an unequalled victory and an unparalleled deliverance. The circumstances of these victors were so similar to those of Israel, and their song is so similar, that it is called the song of Moses. But in their deliverance from their dangers, and in their victory over their enemies, they had a greater than Moses for their leader. Their leader was the Lamb of God. It was the Lamb who went before them, led them through their difficulties, brought them through the sea of death, and put the words of their song in their mouth. Therefore their song is called not only the song of Moses, but also the song of the Lamb.



Then follow the very words of their song, which give us some insight into the worship of heaven. In this song they praise the Lord, in the first place, for his works. "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty." All the works of God are great and marvelous. His works of creation must excite admiration and astonishment; his works of providence are as wonderful as his works of creation; but his works in the redemption of his people are more wonderful than any other. Look at the difficulties to be removed. Look at the enemies to be encountered. The salvation of a single soul, involving as it does the gift and sacrifice of Christ, a change of heart, and a victory over Satan, is more wonderful than the creation of the world, or the government of the universe. The redeemed in heaven will especially celebrate the redemption work of God, which could be wrought only by the Lord Almighty. It is to this work the victors refer when they say, "great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty." And in their song they praise the Lord, in the second place, for his ways. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints"; or rather, as it is in the margin and in the improved reading of the standard manuscripts, "thou King of nations." The ways of God, here referred to, are his ways of dealing with his church, and with the enemies of his church. These dealings are just, for God is a God of justice. At times the church may be in adversity, and the enemies of the church may be in prosperity, but in the end God's just ways will be made to appear. And God's ways are true, true to the principles he has revealed, and to the promises he has given in his word. When the redeemed in heaven look back over the way by which God has led them, and over the way he has dealt with their enemies, they will in their thanksgiving have occasion to say again and again, "just and true are thy ways, thou King of nations." In the third place, in their song of praise they express their confidence that as the result of God's dealing with Antichrist, all men shall reverence and honor the Lord. Two reasons are assigned for their confidence. The first is because God is holy. In the judgments he is about to send upon the earth, he would show himself a holy God and one who hated sin with a perfect hatred; and he would show this so plainly and so fearfully that all would turn from their sinfulness and seek after holiness. The second reason for their confidence that all nations would come and worship God is, because his judgments are made manifest. When the great system of iniquity, symbolized by the beast, would be overthrown by the judgments of God, the nations would see that God was the only proper object of worship, and they would turn away from every false god and worship the Lord alone. And when the victors foresaw the terrible judgments which would manifest the holiness of God in the sight of the dwellers on the earth, they knew that every one would fear and glorify the Lord, and that all nations would come and worship at his feet. Knowing this, they sang with glad hearts of the glorious day which was about to dawn.

III. We must now turn away from the song of the victors to THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXECUTING THE WRATH OF GOD. "And after that I looked, and behold the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." In these verses, there are four points to be considered: the open temple; the seven angels; the seven golden vials; and the smoke that filled the temple so that no one could approach the mercy seat.

1. John saw that *the temple* of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was *opened*. The temple which he saw was that heavenly temple which occupies such a prominent place in some of the previous visions, and which resembled both the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon. Hence it is called the temple of the tabernacle. This temple, like the earthly temple, was the place of God's glory, and a testimony or a witness of his presence with his church. Hence it is called the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony. This temple was now opened so that the apostle could see into the most holy place, where the mercy seat stood, and where the divine glory was especially manifested. This indicates that God was about to come out of his temple and reveal his glory in the presence of all. The open temple must have led the apostle to expect, and it must lead us to expect, that God was about to manifest in some unusual way his power, his holiness, his justice, and the other attributes of his glorious being.

2. We see coming out of the temple *the seven angels* who were to be instrumental in visiting the earth with plagues. They came out of the temple to show that they had received their command and their commission from God himself. They were clothed with pure white linen, to show that they, like all the inhabitants of heaven, were spotless and holy. They were girded with golden girdles, to show that they were of princely rank among the heavenly hosts. They were in all respects attired in a manner befitting their exalted station.

3. We see *the golden vials* full of the wrath of God. The word "vial," which means a small, slender bottle, does not express the meaning of the original word. This word properly means a bowl or goblet. But as the word vial has become so associated with this vision in the mind of every reader of the New Testament, I will use it more frequently than the other words which come nearer the original. These golden vials were given to the angels by one of the four living creatures, who are the representatives of the earthly church. This implies that the earthly church is especially

and intensely interested in the coming calamities. One golden vial is given to each angel, for the angels are in succession to pour out their vials upon the earth. These vials are full of the wrath of the ever-living God. The figure seems to be that of a cup of poison. By this figure the wrath of God is often described. It is a cup of trembling, a cup of fury, a cup of red wine; and, in the present instance, a cup full of wrath. The wrath which fills this cup is terrible, for it is the wrath of that God who liveth for ever and ever. His enemies may live long in prosperity and may long escape the just recompense of their deeds, but some time during the eternal life of him who liveth for ever and ever their cup will be filled and will be poured out without mixture.

4. John saw that the heavenly *temp'le was filled with smoke*, so that no one could enter till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. Thus God once appeared on mount Sinai. His glory and power manifested themselves in fire and smoke, so that no one could approach the mountain. On this occasion God's glory and power manifested themselves in a similar way. No one could now approach the Majesty on high. The mercy seat was no longer accessible. The time was when these enemies of the church might have hoped for forgiveness, but that time had passed. The divine patience was exhausted. The sentence of punishment had been spoken. The instruments of destruction had started on their mission. No intercession could stay the sentence or avert the destruction. The temple was filled with smoke, and no man was able to enter it till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

We must therefore expect that the earth is to be visited with fearful calamities. The song of the heavenly victors, the open temple, the attire of the angels, the vials of wrath, and the smoke which prevented all access to the mercy seat, awaken such expectations. And when we come to study the next chapter, the symbols which appear as one vial after another is poured out, and the events in history in which these symbols receive their adequate fulfillment, we will find that our expectations will be more than realized.

## LECTURE XLIII.

### THE FIRST VIAL.

And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth: and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.—REV. 16 : 1, 2.

ALL the arrangements for the execution of the wrath of God upon the worshippers of the beast are now finished. The song of those who had gained the victory in former days was ended. One of the living creatures had given to the seven angels the golden vials full of wrath. The angels had received these vials in their hands, and were waiting for their final orders. All the heavenly congregation, the redeemed multitude, the angelic host, the four and twenty elders, the four living creatures, and the enraptured apostle in their midst, were standing in silent expectation and awe, for all the preliminaries indicated that there was to be an unusual manifestation of the divine power and indignation. Let us in the spirit take our stand with the rest, and watch with reverent hearts the great and marvelous works of our God towards the church and towards the enemies of the church.

I. The first thing which arrests our attention is **THE FINAL COMMAND TO THE WAITING ANGELS** to execute their commission. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." This command was from God, for it came out of the temple, where God especially abode. It was in a loud voice, befitting the Majesty on high, and compelling immediate obedience. When God speaks in power, there is no hesitation on the part of those who hear. One reason why men are so disobedient is because God speaks to them in the still small voice of mercy, and because they do not recognize in that voice the voice of God. When he lays aside that still small voice and speaks in the thunder tones of his majesty and authority, they will wonder how they ever dared to disobey. The command is in the words, "Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." These vials have already been described. They, or rather, that which is contained in them, is an emblem of the wrath of God. The figure is a common one in the Scriptures, and is familiar to every reader of the Bible. The only thing in this command which requires special notice in this connection is, that it refers to the present. The wrath of God was then to be poured out upon his enemies. The worshippers of the beast had long enjoyed prosperity, but the divine patience was at last exhausted, and the guilty earth was now to be visited with such plagues as it had never seen before. The angels obey this commandment, and one after another pours out his vial upon the earth. As the successive vials are poured out, symbols of terror are made to pass before our eyes.

II. The rest of the present lecture will be occupied with an explanation of the symbols which appeared when **THE FIRST VIAL** was poured out. "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast,

and upon them which worshiped his image." There is some resemblance between these last plagues, as they are called, and the plagues which were inflicted upon the people of Pharaoh during the closing scenes of Israel's captivity in Egypt. The plague which was sent under the first vial resembles the sixth plague of Egypt, which is described Ex. 9:8-12. And there is some resemblance between the symbols which showed themselves when the vials were poured out, and those which showed themselves when the trumpets were sounded. And though the resemblance is more marked in some of the following symbols, there is a noticeable resemblance between the first vial and the first trumpet, which is described in chapter 8:7. It will be well to remember these points of resemblance, for we will have occasion to refer to them in the future, and they will be of use in helping us to understand the difficult visions of this chapter.

The first vial was poured out upon the earth. The word "earth" does not have the same meaning in verse 2 that it has in verse 1. In the first verse, where the angels are commanded to pour out their vials on the earth, it means the world as distinguished from heaven. In the second verse, where it is said that the angel poured out his vial upon the earth, it means the land as distinguished from the sea. The subsequent vials were poured out upon the sea, and the rivers, and the sun, but this one was poured out upon the land. In this respect, it resembles the first trumpet, under which, as we have seen, the fire and hail mingled with blood were cast upon the land, and one-third part of the trees and all the green grass were burned up. We must therefore look for the fulfillment of this part of the symbol in judgments inflicted upon the land, and not in judgments inflicted on the sea.

When the vial was poured out, "there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon men." The word translated "sore" is used but once in the New Testament outside of the Revelation, viz., in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where it is said the dogs came and licked his sores. In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, it is used to describe the boils which troubled the Egyptians, in the plague referred to a little while ago, the boils which afflicted Job, the patriarch of Uz, some of the symptoms of leprosy, and the sickness which brought Hezekiah so near to death. It would be useless to attempt to discover what particular physical malady this word is employed in the Scriptures to describe. It may be the small pox, as some authorities maintain with some show of probability; or it may be some peculiar form of leprosy, as others maintain. Whatever it was, it must have been some boil, or sore, or ulcer of a severe and painful character. This sore or ulcer is described as "noisome," that is, as hurtful, dangerous and offensive. It is still further described as "grievous," that is, painful and hard to bear. This noisome and grievous ulcer fell upon men and filled them with pain and suffering, and brought them down to a loath-

some death. In order to form some idea of what John saw in vision, we might try to imagine what Egypt witnessed during the prevalence of that plague to which reference has been made. It is indeed a pitiful sight when a single individual is thus afflicted. It is no wonder that the rich man did not invite the beggar Lazarus to his table, whose running ulcers were revealed by the rags of his poverty. It is no wonder that the patriarch of Uz, covered from head to foot with putrefying sores, was forsaken by his friends. But in Egypt, on that day when Moses sprinkled the ashes of the furnace toward heaven, not one man, but all were thus visited. Husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and neighbors, all were involved in the common plague. No one had pity to spare for another, for all were to be pitied. The whole land was visited with sores. It was such a sight as this, John saw in vision, as he looked down from the plains of heaven upon the plains of earth. Men seemed to be stricken with the plague in its most terrible and loathsome form. They were writhing in their agony and crying out in their pain. We may, perhaps, imagine the scene as it presented itself to the seer of Patmos, but we cannot describe it. We may let our imaginations take their wildest flight, but we cannot get beyond the horribleness of the picture suggested by the words, "there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon men."

Of course this is a symbol. When the first vial is poured out, we are not to expect such a literal plague to fall upon men; we are to expect some calamity, of which such a plague would be a proper symbol. And without reference to any preconceived theory of interpretation, what would the symbol of the noisome and grievous ulcer lead us to expect? It would lead us to expect that those men upon whom it is represented as falling would be covered and saturated with moral corruption, that their moral corruption would break out into such words and deeds that they would neither look nor act like men. It would lead us to expect a time of great and open sinfulness, when men would seem to be mad with the delirium of sin. It would lead us to expect a time of spiritual death, when men through the greatness of their pain and madness would deliberately choose spiritual death rather than life. Whether there ever was such a time as this in the history of the world, we will have occasion to inquire after a while.

This plague, we are further told, did not fall upon all men, but only upon those who had the mark of the beast, and who worshiped his image. In former lectures, the meaning of the symbol of the beast was fully discussed. It is not necessary, in this connection, to repeat that discussion. It will be sufficient to state the conclusion at which we then arrived. The beast is the symbol of the anti-Christian power of Rome. The mark of the beast is those peculiar rites and ceremonies, by which the Papal church distinguished its members from all other men. The image of the beast is the general councils of the Papal church. Those who had the mark of the

beast and who worshiped his image, would be the members of the church of Rome who, by the observance of its rites and ceremonies, separated themselves from other men, and who honored and obeyed the decrees of the Papal authorities. If these conclusions are correct, the vision we are now considering would lead us to expect that the calamity shadowed forth by the noisome and grievous ulcer would fall upon the adherents of the Papal church. Those who did not carry the mark of the beast, and who did not worship his image, would be exempt from this terrible outbreak of moral corruption.

This is the symbol when the first angel poured out his vial upon the land. A noisome and grievous ulcer fell upon the followers of the beast. And this symbol points for its fulfillment to some wild and fatal outbreak of moral corruption among the members of the church of Rome, which would be the beginning of the destruction of that church, the first of the last plagues which would end in its entire overthrow.

We have then to look through the history of that church and see whether there are any such events recorded there, in which these fearful symbols find an adequate fulfillment. But to what period of its history shall we turn? If we were correct in the last lecture, in which we tried to show that the seven vials were the development of the last trumpet, then we need not look for the fulfillment of the vials previous to the sixteenth century; for under the six trumpets, we traced the prominent events in the history of the world up to the rise of the Turkish power and to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. If the seven vials continue the history of the world from that time to the end of the present order of things, we are to look for the events symbolized by the noisome and grievous ulcer subsequent to the Reformation. Then, taking up the history of the Papal church, and of the nations under the control of that church, let us see whether we can find anything in which the symbol of the first vial receives an adequate fulfillment.

After the Reformation, there were bloody wars and fierce persecutions, but we can find nothing loathsome and terrible enough to meet the requirements of the symbol, till we come to the French revolution, which began in 1789, and continued for several years. It is hardly necessary to say that there is a difference of opinion among expositors as to the fulfillment of this symbol, but many of the ablest of modern expositors are agreed that it receives its fulfillment in the French revolution of the latter part of the eighteenth century. We may mention Elliot, Cunningham, Faber, Keith and Lord, as a few of the prominent men who have adopted this interpretation. And though it must be confessed that there are some difficulties connected with this interpretation, these difficulties seem less numerous and less formidable than those which are connected with any other. Let us consider some of the prominent features of the French revolution, and

see whether there is any reasonable ground for supposing it to be the event which was shadowed forth by the noisome and grievous plague. As has been said, we are not to suppose that this symbol is fulfilled in any literal plague or ulcer which fell upon the bodies of men. It would not then be a symbol. It points to political and moral corruption in the state, which would break out into terrible and loathsome words and deeds. In a well known passage in Isaiah, the very same symbol is used to describe such corruption, a passage which should be borne in mind, for it will greatly assist in explaining the vision now under consideration. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

The question we have now to answer is, was there, at the time of the French revolution, a moral corruption which broke out in words and deeds, a corruption great enough to be an adequate antitype of the noisome and grievous ulcer? In order to answer this question, we must make our appeal to history. If the history of those times is to be believed, there are three undoubted manifestations of unparalleled corruption, viz., open murders, open licentiousness, and open infidelity.

1. The moral corruption of those times is seen in *the open murders* which were then committed. The cruelties which were so common, and the little value which was placed upon human life, were a noisome and grievous ulcer upon the body politic. In proof of this I will not go into any rhetorical or imaginary account of the scenes which were then enacted. I will quote from the pages of history. For this purpose I have selected Alison's History of the French Revolution, which was written without any intention of throwing light upon the Apocalypse. Time will permit me to quote only a few extracts; and in making my extracts, I will choose some of the least revolting, for some of the scenes described are terrible and disgusting. Let us then turn to the testimony of Alison concerning the murders which were committed at that period when the noisome ulcer attained its height, and which, by common consent, is called "the reign of terror." "A revolutionary tribunal was formed under direction of Carrier, and it soon outstripped even the rapid march of Danton and Robespierre. Their principle was that it was necessary to destroy *en masse* all the prisoners. At their command was formed a corps called the Legion of Marat, composed of the most determined and blood-thirsty of the revolutionists, the members of which were entitled, on their own authority, to incarcerate any person whom they chose. The number of their prisoners was soon between three and four thousand, and they divided among themselves all their property. Whenever a fresh supply of captives was wanted, the alarm of a counter-revolution, the *generale* beat, the cannon were



planted ; and this was immediately followed by innumerable arrests. Nor were they long in disposing of the captives. The miserable wretches were either slain with poniards in the prisons, or carried out and drowned by wholesale in the Loire. On one occasion a hundred ' fanatical priests,' as they were termed, were taken out together, stripped of their clothes, and precipitated into the waves. \* \* \* Women, big with child, infants eight, nine and ten years of age were thrown together into the stream, on the sides of which men, armed with sabres, were placed to cut off their hands, if the waves should throw them undrowned on the shore. \* \* \* So immense were the numbers of those who were cut off by the guillotine or mowed down by fusilades, that three hundred men were occupied for six weeks in covering with earth the vast multitude of corpses which filled the trenches which had been cut in the department of Nantes to receive the dead bodies. Ten thousand died of disease, pestilence and horror in the prisons of that department alone. On one occasion, by the order of Carrier, twenty-three of the royalists, on another twenty-four, were guillotined together without any trial. The executioner remonstrated, but in vain. Among them were many children of seven or eight years of age, and seven women ; the executioner died two or three days after with horror at what he himself had done. At another time, one hundred and forty women, incarcerated as suspected, were drowned together, though actively engaged in making bandages and shirts for the republican soldiers. So great was the multitude of captives who were brought in on all sides, that the executioners, as well as the company of Marat, declared themselves exhausted with fatigue ; and a new method of disposing of them was adopted, borrowed from Nero, but improved on the plan of that tyrant. A hundred, or a hundred and fifty victims, for the most part women and children, were crowded together into a boat, with a concealed trap door in the bottom, which was conducted into the middle of the Loire ; at a signal given, the crew leaped into another boat, the bolts were withdrawn, and the shrieking victims were precipitated into the waves, amid the laughter of the company of Marat, who stood on the banks, to cut down any who approached the shore. This is what Carrier called his *republican baptisms*. The *republican marriages* were, if possible, a still greater refinement of cruelty. Two persons of different sexes, generally an old man and an old woman, or a young man and a young woman, bereft of every species of dress, were bound together, and after being left in torture in that situation for half an hour, thrown into the river. It was ascertained, by authenticated documents, that six hundred children had, on one occasion alone, perished by that inhuman species of death. The *noyades* at Nantes alone amounted to twenty-five, on each of which occasions from eighty to a hundred and fifty persons perished ; and such was the quantity of corpses accumulated in the Loire, that the water of that river was infected so as to

render a public ordinance necessary, forbidding the use of it to the inhabitants. No less than eighteen thousand perished in these ways, or by the guillotine, in Nantes alone, during the administration of Carrier; and the mariners, when they heaved their anchors, frequently brought up boats charged with corpses. Birds of prey flocked to the shores and fed on human flesh; while the very fish became so poisonous, as to induce an order of the municipality of Nantes prohibiting them to be taken by the fishermen. \* \* \* Several hundred persons were thrown every night, for some months, into the river; their shrieks at being led out of the entrepot on board the barks, wakened all the inhabitants of the town and froze every heart with horror. \* \* \* Fouquet boasted that he had despatched nine thousand in other quarters on the same river. From Saumur to Nantes, a distance of sixty miles, the Loire was, for several weeks, red with human blood; and the multitude of corpses it bore to the ocean so prodigious, that the adjacent coast was strewn with them, when a violent west wind and high tide having brought part of them back to Nantes, followed by a train of sharks and marine animals of prey attracted by so prodigious an accumulation of human bodies, they were thrown ashore in vast numbers. Fifteen thousand persons perished there under the hands of the executioner, or of diseases in prison, in one month; the total victims of the reign of terror at that place exceeded thirty thousand." Vol. 2, p. 391.

So it was in every part of France. As ulcers on the surface of the body indicate disease within, so these cruel murders indicated great corruption in the state. They were the direct outgrowth of the doctrines and practices of the church of Rome. The French people were but carrying out the lessons they had learned from the priests. They were imitating the inquisition and the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the persecutions which had been inflicted in the name of the holy Jesus, with which the history of the dominant church, had made them familiar. And as they were apt scholars, they surpassed their teachers in excesses and refinement of cruelty. Every one who reads the history of the reign of terror in connection with the history of the centuries which preceded it, must be convinced that the cruelties of the former are the legitimate result of the cruelties of the latter.

2. The moral corruption of the times is seen in *the open licentiousness* which prevailed. Again I quote from the same author, and I select a single quotation which only hints at excesses which disgraced the French capital: "At the same time, the Goddess of Reason appeared, personified by a celebrated beauty, Madame Maillard, of the opera, known in more than one character to most of the Convention. The goddess, after being embraced by the president, was mounted on a magnificent car, and conducted by an immense crowd to the cathedral of Notre Dame, to take the

place of the Deity. There she was elevated on the high altar, and received the adoration of all present; while a numerous band of elegant young women, all *figurantes* of the opera, her attendants, whose alluring looks already indicated their profession, retired into the chapels round the choir, where every species of licentiousness and obscenity was indulged in without control, with hardly any veil from the public gaze. To such a length was this carried, that Robespierre afterwards declared that Chaumette deserved death for the abominations he had permitted on that occasion. Thenceforward that ancient edifice was called the *temple of reason*." Vol. 2, p. 600.

Such excesses as this, which indicated the moral corruption of the nation, was also the outgrowth of the doctrines and practices of the church of Rome. The Jesuits taught that persons who were blinded by lust, or who had probable reason for their transgression, were excusable for their sins. Permissions to commit sin were freely sold. And the practice of the priesthood was even worse than their teaching. The priests, with some exceptions, were men of notoriously immoral lives. They lived in shameless violation of the seventh commandment. The licentiousness of the reign of terror, revolting as it is, is only the development of the teachings and practices of the church of Rome. It was but an outward ulcer which indicated inward corruption.

3. The moral corruption of the times is seen in the *open infidelity* in which the nation gloried. We appeal again to the testimony of the same historian: "Having massacred the great of the present and insulted the illustrious of former ages, nothing remained to the revolutionists but to direct their vengeance against heaven itself. Fouché, Hebert and Chaumette, the leaders of the municipality, publicly expressed their determination to dethrone the King of heaven, as well as the monarchs of earth. To accomplish this design, they prevailed on Gobel, the apostate constitutional bishop of Paris, to appear at the bar of the Assembly, accompanied by some of the clergy of his diocese, and there abjure the Christian faith. He declared that no other national religion was now required but that of equality, liberty and morality. Many of the constitutional bishops and clergy present joined in the proposition. The Convention received them with loud applause and gave them the fraternal kiss. Crowds of drunken artisans and shameless prostitutes crowded to the bar and trampled under their feet the sacred vases consecrated for ages to the holiest purposes of religion. The churches were stripped of all their ornaments; their plate and valuable contents brought in heaps to the municipality and the Convention, from whence they were sent to the mint to be melted down. Trampling under foot the images of our Saviour and the Virgin, they elevated, amid shouts of applause, the busts of Marat and Leppelletier, and danced around them singing parodies on the hallelujah, and dancing the Carmagnole. \* \* \*

During several weeks daily abjurations by the constitutional clergy took place at the bar of the Convention. On the 10th November Sieyes appeared and abjured like the rest. 'I have lived,' he said, 'the victim of superstition. I will not be its slave. I know no other worship but that of liberty, no other religion but the love of humanity and country.' Shortly after a still more indecent exhibition took place before the Assembly. \* \* Hebert, Chaumette and their associates appeared at the bar and declared that 'God did not exist, and that the worship of reason was to be substituted in his stead.' Chaumette said, 'Legislative fanaticism has lost its hold; it has given place to reason. Its dark eyes could not bear the light of reason. We have left its temples; they are regenerated. To-day an immense audience are assembled under its Gothic roofs, which for the first time will re-echo the voice of truth. There the French will celebrate their true worship—that of liberty and reason. There we will form new vows for the prosperity of the armies of the republic; there will we abandon the worship of inanimate idols for that of reason, this animated image, the *chef-d'œuvre* of creation.' A veiled female, arrayed in blue drapery, was brought into the Assembly; and Chaumette, taking her by the hand, 'Mortals,' said he, 'cease to tremble before the powerless thunders of a God whom your fears have created. Henceforth acknowledge no divinity but reason. I offer you its noblest and purest image; if you must have idols, sacrifice only to such idols as this.' When, letting fall the veil, he exclaimed, 'Fall before the august senate of freedom, O vail of reason.'" Vol. 2, page 600.

And this infidelity was the outgrowth of the doctrines and practices of the church of Rome. If Christianity was what it appeared to be from the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic church, intelligent men were excusable for rejecting it and choosing blank infidelity in its stead. The infidelity of the reign of terror was but the ulcer which indicated inward corruption.

The French revolution weakened the power of the Papacy. France had been for many centuries, and was then, one of the main supports of the church of Rome. Her ruler was known as the eldest son of the church. Therefore any disaster to France was a disaster to the church. The reign of terror seems to be the first in the series of providential events which will result in the entire overthrow of that anti-Christian power.

From these remarks and quotations, it will be seen that the noisome and grievous ulcer of the first vial finds an adequate fulfillment in the French revolution of the latter part of the eighteenth century. The effects of this revolution were not confined to France. The doctrines and practices of the revolutionists spread, to a greater or less extent, through all the countries and peoples of Europe. And the conclusion at which we have arrived is strengthened by the figures which writers have employed to describe the

reign of terror, and which show how appropriate is the figure of the vision we are now considering. It is said to be "the fever of Jacobinism," "the epidemic of atheism," "the French distemper," "such a plague that the protection of the most severe quarantine ought to be used against it," "the corruption of all morals," "the decomposition of all society." And while we must confess that there are difficulties in the way of this theory, these difficulties seem to be less than those which are in the way of any other theory. As we read the description which historians give us of these terrible years, we must say, "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." "There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon men."

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## LECTURE XLIV.

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### THE SECOND AND THIRD VIALS.

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.—REV. 16: 3-7.

IN the last lecture we saw that there was probable ground for supposing that the French revolution was the event shadowed forth by the symbol which appeared when the first angel poured out his vial upon the land. The murders, the licentiousness, and the infidelity of the reign of terror were noisome and grievous ulcers breaking out upon the body politic, so that there was no soundness in it. In the present lecture we are to describe the symbols which appeared when the second and third angels poured out their vials, and to discover, if we can, the events in which these symbols find their fulfillment.

I. Let us turn our attention to THE SECOND VIAL and its symbol. "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea." There is a noticeable difference between the first and second vials, in the place upon which they were poured. The first vial was poured upon the land; the

second vial upon the sea. We must therefore look for the fulfillment of this part of the symbol in calamities inflicted upon the sea, and not in calamities inflicted on the land. When this vial was poured out, the sea became as the blood of the slain. In this respect the second vial resembles the first plague in Egypt, during which the water of the river was turned into blood, so that the Egyptians could not drink of it. And in this respect the second vial resembles the second trumpet, which is described in chapter 8: 8, 9. To this resemblance between the second vial and the second trumpet we will have occasion to refer in subsequent remarks. The effect of this change in the waters of the sea was disastrous. Every living thing which was in the sea died. The figure leads us to expect that the loss of life would be great. If the water of any sea was actually turned into blood, death would reap a plentiful harvest. It was so in Egypt; it was so under the second trumpet. And so it must be at the time shadowed forth by the second vial.

This is the symbol which appeared when the second angel poured out his vial. The sea became as the blood of slain men, and the lives of multitudes were destroyed. What would this symbol naturally lead us to expect? It would lead us to expect that the time referred to would be a time of great calamity, for the symbol is one of blood; that this calamity would fall upon the navies and commerce and possessions of some maritime power, for the symbol is a bloody sea; that the maritime powers upon which this calamity would fall would be upholders of the church of Rome, for all these calamities were designed for the overthrow of the beast and the destruction of his followers; that this calamity would be attended with great loss of life, for the sea was like a sea of human blood, and we are expressly told that every living thing in the sea died.

Are there any events recorded in history in which these expectations are fulfilled? It will help us to answer this question, if we determine in what part of history we are to look for the fulfillment of these expectations. It must be manifest that the symbol of the second vial must receive its fulfillment subsequent to, but not long after, the time when the symbol of the first vial receives its fulfillment. If the position in the last lecture was correct, viz., that the noisome and grievous sore was the symbol of the French revolution, then the bloody sea of the second vial must be the symbol of events subsequent to and closely connected with the reign of terror. Let us take up the history of those years and see whether there are any calamities recorded therein, pertaining to the sea, which would be a fulfillment of the vision. No sooner had liberty been proclaimed in France than the French in St. Domingo, the largest and most flourishing colony of France, proclaimed liberty. But while they proclaimed the freedom and equality of the whole human race, they made an exception of the black population of the island; but this population was wise enough to see that if liberty was

good for the whites, it was good for them, and they struck a bold blow for freedom. The war which followed was long and bloody. In it, sixty thousand perished; but it resulted in driving the French from the colony; and the colony of St. Domingo became the republic of Hayti. And this was only the beginning of disasters to the maritime power of France. There followed a series of naval battles, in which the fleets of France were entirely swept away. This series of naval battles is thus described by Elliott: "Meanwhile the great naval war between France and England was in progress; which from its commencement in February, 1793, lasted for above twenty years, with no intermission but that of the short and delusive peace of Amiens; in which war, the maritime power of Great Britain was strengthened by the Almighty providence that protected her to destroy everywhere the French ships, commerce and smaller colonies, including those of the fast and long-continued allies of the French, Holland and Spain. In the year 1793, the greater part of the French fleet at Toulon was destroyed by Lord Hood; in June, 1794, followed Lord Howe's great victory over the French off Ushant; then the taking of Corsica and nearly all the smaller Spanish and French West India islands; then, in 1795, Lord Bridport's naval victory and the capture of the Cape of Good Hope; as also soon after, of a French and Dutch fleet sent to retake it; then, in 1797, the victory over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, and that off Camperdown over the Dutch; then, in succession, Lord Nelson's three mighty victories, of the Nile in 1798, of Copenhagen in 1801, and in 1803 of Trafalgar. Altogether, in this naval war, from its beginning in 1793 to its end in 1815, it appears, from James' Naval History, that there were destroyed near two hundred ships of the line, between three and four hundred frigates, and an almost incalculable number of smaller vessels of war and ships of commerce. It is most truly stated by Dr. Keith, that the whole history of the world does not present such a period of naval war, destruction and bloodshed. In the figurative language of prophecy, 'the sea became as the blood of a dead man.' \* \* \* \* In Mexico, and Venezuela, and Buenos Ayres, and Chili, and Peru, the flames of civil war broke out successively and spread with a universal conflagration. The atrocities of that war are said by a writer in the *Quarterly Review* to have been unparalleled in the civil wars of ancient and modern time. \* \* \* And the Brazils, having been a little subsequently separated from Portugal, the prediction was fulfilled, in a manner the most complete and remarkable, with respect to those greater colonies of Papal Europe, as well as in regard to the lesser before spoken of, 'and every living soul died in the sea.'" Vol. 3, pp. 378-380.

These disasters were not confined to France. The other Papal powers which had navies and maritime dependencies were alike crippled. Every effort made by France, and Spain, and Portugal, and Italy, to avert the

judgment was crushed. Their colonies were lost; their fleets were annihilated.

The theory that this is a correct interpretation of the symbol is strengthened when we compare the second vial with the second trumpet, to which it bears so close a resemblance. The symbol of the second trumpet was fulfilled in the invasion of the Roman empire by Genseric and the Vandals. They devastated the maritime provinces of the empire, especially those on the southern shores of the Mediterranean sea; and making Northern Africa their headquarters, they made excursions against all the adjacent sea coasts, destroyed Roman commerce, defeated the largest fleets which could be brought against them, and penetrated to the very gates of the eternal city itself. If the symbol of that trumpet was fulfilled in that series of naval disasters, there is certainly ground for supposing that the similar symbol of the second vial was fulfilled in the naval disasters of France and her allies.

These naval disasters weakened the power of Rome. If the reign of terror was the first blow, these disasters were the second; for France and her allies were the great support of the Papal church. And when we remember the number and the greatness of these disasters, and how they fell upon the maritime colonies and fleets of the Papal powers, and how they were attended with loss of life, we see that they are an appropriate and adequate fulfillment of the symbol, "the sea became as the blood of a dead man."

II. We come now to THE THIRD VIAL. "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood." The meaning of the symbol which appeared when the third angel poured out his vial is plain. The fact that the rivers and the fountains of waters became blood indicates that there was to be great carnage along their banks, carnage so great that they would seem to be streams of human blood. The parallel vision in the destruction of the old empire is recorded, chapter 8: 10, 11. There is such a resemblance between the third trumpet and the third vial, that the interpretation of the former must help us in the interpretation of the latter. What was the interpretation of the former? It shadowed forth the invasion of the Roman empire by the Huns. The Huns did not attack the maritime parts of the empire as did the Vandals; they attacked those inland parts in which rivers and streams of water abounded. Attila poured out his forces along the Danube, the Rhine and the Po, and their tributaries, and stained with blood every capital, and city, and plain on the banks of these rivers. There is such a resemblance between the third trumpet and the third vial, that we would expect the calamity shadowed forth by the latter to be similar to the calamity shadowed forth by the former; and that this calamity would fall upon the same locality,



a locality which abounded in streams of water. And this resemblance is not the only thing by which we are to be guided in our interpretation of the symbol of the third vial. The following points are plain: the calamity shadowed forth under the third vial would succeed those shadowed forth under the previous ones, but there would be no long interval between them, for one vial was poured out after the other in rapid succession. This calamity would be visited upon a region where there had been much persecution. It would be a just retribution for the persecutions which had occurred there. Therefore, no event can be a reasonable fulfillment of the symbol of the third vial, if it is not a calamity similar to that inflicted upon the old empire by Attila and the Huns; if it is not inflicted on a region abounding with streams of water; if it does not closely follow the French revolution and the maritime disasters of France; if it is not in a region where there had been great persecutions of the saints. The question, then, for us to answer is, is there any event in which all these necessary conditions are fulfilled?

If we have been correct in the interpretation of the previous vials, we can have no difficulty in discovering the fulfillment of the symbol of the third vial in the bloody campaigns of Napoleon. Near the close of the reign of terror, and while the second vial was being poured out upon the sea, he started upon his strange career, which deluged Europe with blood and which had no little influence in shaping the history of the world. It is well known that the campaigns of Napoleon were, for the most part, in the very regions over which the hordes of Attila had poured centuries before. His great battles were fought in the valleys of the Rhine, the Danube, the Po, and their tributaries. There was not an acre on the banks of these rivers which was not furrowed with soldiers' graves. There was not a stream which was not tinged with soldiers' blood. There was not a forest which was not plowed by the feet of his horses. There was not a city, a hamlet or a cottage which was not torn by the shot of his artillery. The following is a brief synopsis of his campaigns as prepared by Elliott: "In the annals of the year 1792, we read of the French and Austrian armies conflicting at Mentz, and Spire, and Worms, all situated on the middle Rhine, the very towns that Attila long before desolated; of other armies conflicting in the Austrian Netherlands watered by the Meuse, the last tributary of the lower Rhine; and also of a third French army advancing into Savoy, as far as the foot of the Piedmontese Alpine frontier. \* \* \* In 1793 and 1794, the scene of war and bloodshed was still the same. The French army of the Meuse, at first unsuccessful, soon recovered its ground; and driving the Allies out of Flanders, advanced into Holland. \* \* \* In like manner, the army of the middle Rhine, at first driven back across the river, returned and repulsed the Allies in 1794 beyond it, after battles of tremendous bloodshed. In 1795, the

carnage was renewed with various success on the middle Rhine and its tributaries. On quitting its valley, the armies of Jourdan and Moreau advanced on the Danube as a common centre. \* \* \* The Alpine springs of water were even now to experience the bitterness of the plague. This year is ever memorable in history, as that of the first Italian campaign of Napoleon against the allied Sardinians and Austrians. Its course is to be traced from Alpine river to river along the whole of the North of Italy. In the progress of the contest, every river was made a position and a battle field; the Bormida, the Tanaro, the upper Po, the Adda, with its bridge of Lodi, the Mincio, the Adige, the Brenta, and many others, were in succession turned into blood. \* \* \* But the vial had not yet exhausted itself. In the year 1799, the fountains of waters became the scene of the celebrated Italian campaign of Suwarrow, and they were again, stream after stream, turned into blood. \* \* \* Moreover, the Danube had now to feel more fully than before the outpouring of the vial. The war was directed by Moreau to Ulm, the first great fortress on the upper Danube; and thence, still by the line of the Danube, to Ingolstadt, until at length, in the winter following, the victory of Hohenlinden, on the Iser, one of its tributaries, having decided the German campaign, peace was sued for by Austria. \* \* \* The campaign of Napoleon is traced along the Danube from Ulm and Ingolstadt down to Vienna and the old adjacent camp of Attila. The battle of Austerlitz, a town on one of the northern tributaries of the same great German river, ended the war and broke the power of Austria." Vol. 3, pp. 383-386.

The chief things to which attention should be directed in these extracts are: that the region devastated is the same region which was devastated by Attila; that it was a region abounding in streams of water; that these streams of water ran with blood; and that in these respects the symbol of the vision receives its fulfillment.

But what was the reason for these terrible judgments? Though there were without doubt many other sins which called down the vengeance of heaven, yet no one can question the fact, that the sin referred to by the angel was the chief; for those lands had again and again been baptized with the blood of the saints, who are dear in the sight of God, and whose death he has promised to avenge. "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." We will not enter into any discussion of the question suggested by the mention of "the angel of the waters," the question whether, in the providential government of God, certain countries were assigned to the guardianship of particular angels. The Jews thought they were. And though the passage we are now considering, the words of Daniel where he speaks of

"the prince of the kingdom of Persia," and the words of our Lord where he says of children, that "their angels do always behold the face of my Father," seem to look in this direction, yet direct Scripture proof is wanting. All that it is necessary for us to know in order to understand the words under consideration is, that the "angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that are the heirs of salvation," and that one of these ministering spirits, who had seen the terrible calamities which had tinged with blood the rivers of earth, was moved to declare the reason for these startling judgments of the Most High.

It does, at first sight, seem strange that the loving and merciful Father in heaven would permit such things to be enacted on earth as those which were witnessed during the reign of terror, and in the bloody wars which followed it; but the angel, who knew the reasons, could see, and he would have us see that God was righteous though he judged thus. The reason was, that those men who were thus visited had shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and because they had shed the blood of the saints and prophets, God had given them blood to drink. They were worthy of this punishment, for it was a just recompense of their deeds. But had the countries, weakened and devastated by the campaigns of Napoleon, been notorious for their persecutions? Had the valleys of the Rhine, and the Danube, and the Po been peculiarly stained with saintly blood? To these questions but one answer can be returned. The Huguenots in France, the Albigenses and Waldenses in Piedmont, and in other parts of northern Italy, the Hussites and Lutherans in Austria, had all suffered, even unto death, for the cause of Christ. The countries which suffered most during the campaigns referred to, are the very countries which are most notorious in history for their cruelty to the members of the true church. There was scarcely a spot on which a soldier of France, or Austria, or Italy was killed, which had not in previous centuries been honored by the martyrdom of some of Christ's witnesses. There was scarcely a stream which was reddened by the carnage of battle, which had not in previous centuries been reddened by the blood of martyred saints. The just retribution of God is so plainly seen in these calamities, and these calamities point so clearly to the cruelties which preceded them, that the historian says, "the impartial justice of providence made that terrific period the means of punishing the national sins of the contending parties."

And the righteousness of God, in inflicting these sore calamities upon the powers which had persecuted the church, receives further confirmation. To the cry of the angel of the waters, there comes a response from the heavenly altar. "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." According to the improved reading of the standard manuscripts, this verse should read, "I heard the altar say," &c. The very altar in heaven was ready to vindicate

the justice of God. We are here reminded of what occurred when the fifth seal was broken. Then the apostle saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they gave. In the present instance, it seems that the altar spake for the martyred souls who were under it when it said, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, just and righteous are thy judgments." They knew that the judgments of God were true to the promises he had made and on which they trusted. They knew that his judgments were righteous, that is, in accordance with right and justice. Those who are yet on the earth, blinded as they are by sin, and enveloped in the smoke and dust of present conflicts, are not able in many of the events of providence to see the truth and righteousness of God's judgments, but those who are in heaven can see what we are not able to see. When we enter heaven, if, through divine grace, this blessed privilege will ever be ours, we will say, concerning the darkest and most mysterious trials of our earthly pilgrimage, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."

It will therefore be seen that there are reasonable grounds for supposing that the symbols of the third vial receive their fulfillment in the calamities which were brought upon central and southern Europe by the campaigns of Napoleon. These calamities followed soon after the reign of terror and the maritime disasters of France. They came with special force upon the countries abounding in rivers and streams of water. They were attended with such loss of human life that the rivers and streams of water were in many instances red with human blood. They came upon a region in which there had been great persecutions, and they were a just retribution for previous persecutions. We are, then, justified in concluding that these calamities are the events shadowed forth when the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters.

We are here reminded, as we are in many other places in the Scriptures, of the fact that God's punishments often bear a striking resemblance to the sins for which they are inflicted. Those nations had shed the blood of the saints, and their blood was shed. Similar instances are many. Jacob deceived his father, and his children deceived him. David violated the sanctity of the family relation, and the sanctity of his own home was violated. Adonibezek received the same mutilation he had inflicted on his captives. In the Psalms it is mentioned again and again as a reason for thanksgiving, that the wicked are often caught in the very snares which they laid for others. The Saviour's declaration that those who take the sword will perish with the sword, has often been verified. But whether the punishment will be similar to the transgression or not, one thing is certain—the punishment will come. There is but one way of escape. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

## LECTURE XLV.

## THE FOURTH AND FIFTH VIALS.

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.—REV. 16: 8–11.

WE have now, in our exposition, reached the fourth vial. In previous lectures we saw that we had reasonable grounds for supposing that the symbol of the first vial shadowed forth the reign of terror; that the symbol of the second vial shadowed forth the maritime disasters of France and her allies, and that the symbol of the third vial shadowed forth the campaigns of Napoleon, which made the streams of central and southern Europe run with blood. With the help derived from these lectures, we will have little difficulty in understanding the symbol which appeared when the fourth angel poured out his vial.

I. The pouring out of THE FOURTH VIAL is described as follows: "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory." Perhaps the remark should have been made at an earlier stage of our exposition, that the events supposed to be shadowed forth by the first vials do not follow each other in clearly defined chronological order; that is, the events symbolized under one vial are not fully accomplished before the events symbolized under the next vial begin. The vials overlap each other. The events symbolized by them are in part contemporaneous. But though each vial begins to be poured out before the preceding one is entirely emptied, the events shadowed forth are so distinct that we have had no difficulty in tracing them in history.

The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun. In this respect, this vision differs from the preceding ones. The first vial was poured out upon the land; the second upon the sea; the third upon rivers and fountains of waters; the fourth upon the sun. The heavenly bodies are symbols of earthly rulers. The sun and moon have been uniformly explained in this way in all similar visions in this book. We may therefore conclude that in the present instance the sun is a symbol of kings and princes, and that the calamity shadowed forth under this vial is to fall with special force upon

them. The symbol, then, is easily understood. When the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, there seemed to be such a change in the sun that it sent forth unnatural heat. Men were scorched by it as if they were burned in the fire. Imagine such a scene as John saw in his vision. The burning heat of the sun was so much increased that men were scorched and blistered by it. You will observe that it is not said that death was the result, but that there was agony which was even worse than death. And while it is reasonable to suppose that death would sometimes follow, yet this symbol is to be interpreted as one of suffering rather than as one of death, for the symbol is one of scorching heat, and not one of blood. But though the calamity shadowed forth would not be as fatal to human life as the calamities shadowed forth under the preceding vials, it would be a sore calamity. This is evident from the symbol itself. If the heat of the sun should ever become so great that men would be scorched by it, though death would sometimes follow, the sufferings of the living would be worse than death. Yet this great suffering produced no beneficial effects upon the lives of men. Though these sufferings were the plagues of God, though they were manifestly inflicted on account of sin, yet men did not repent of the sins of which they were guilty, nor did they give God the glory. They blasphemed his holy name. Their suffering did not lead to repentance, but to hardness of heart.

This is the symbol of the fourth vial. In looking for its fulfillment in history, the following points must be taken into consideration: the events shadowed forth must be closely connected with the events shadowed forth under the previous vials, and there must not be a long interval between them. This vision must have special reference to civil rulers, and it must indicate some change in civil rulers, similar to that which would take place in the natural world if the heat of the sun was increased sevenfold. The event must be a calamitous one, one which would be attended with great suffering and with some loss of life—such suffering and loss of life as would be in the natural world if men would be scorched by the heat of the sun. And this event would not be followed by repentance. Men would still blaspheme God and refuse to give glory to his name.

Let us turn to the pages of history, and see whether there is any event recorded there in which these conditions are fulfilled. In the beginning of the present century, and as a sequel to the French revolution, great changes were made in the governments of Europe. The victorious Napoleon made and unmade kings at his pleasure. Old kingdoms were broken to pieces and new ones were built upon their ruins. Ancient dynasties were overthrown and new ones were established. Let us enumerate a few of these changes. The king of Sardinia was dethroned. After the battle of Austerlitz, Napoleon compelled the emperor of Germany to renounce his title of emperor of the holy Roman empire, which he had held ever

since the days of Charlemagne, for more than a thousand years. And with his title a very considerable part of his empire was taken away. By the battle of Jena, the power of Prussia was overthrown, and half of the dominions of its king was wrested from him and given to others. At the same time, Napoleon made his brother Jerome king of Westphalia, his brother Louis king of Holland, his brother Joseph king of Spain, his general Murat king of Naples, and many other kingdoms and provinces were distributed among his favorites and officers. Even the emperor of Austria, defeated in the campaign which was ended by the celebrated battle of Wagram, was compelled to purchase peace by giving his daughter to Napoleon in marriage. It has been said that between the years 1806 and 1818, the period supposed to be referred to by the fourth vial, more kings were made and unmade than in the whole history of Christendom before. These changes which Napoleon made in the kings and kingdoms of Europe, we believe to be what was shadowed forth by the vial poured out upon the sun. This belief is confirmed by the parallel vision in the destruction of the old Roman empire, which is recorded chapter 8 : 12. The symbol of the fourth vial is so similar to the symbol of the fourth trumpet, that the interpretation of the latter will throw light upon the interpretation of the former. What was the interpretation of the fourth trumpet? As we saw in a previous lecture, that trumpet shadowed forth the invasion of the empire by Odoacer and the Heruli. By these barbarians, the Western empire was overthrown; the emperor Augustulus was compelled to abdicate; the sun, moon and stars of the civil powers were darkened. Certainly, then, there are reasonable grounds for supposing that the similar symbol of the fourth vial is fulfilled in the similar events of a later period; that is, in the overthrow of old kingdoms and the establishment of new ones, changes which were accomplished by the victorious armies of Napoleon.

Were these political changes attended with loss of life and great suffering? To this question but one answer can be returned. For a time, all Europe was scorched with the fire of Napoleon's artillery and musketry, and the lives of multitudes were destroyed by that fire. But, as has been intimated, this vial was distinguished not so much by loss of life as by great suffering. The loss of life is shadowed forth under the previous vials, whose symbols were of blood; but great suffering is shadowed forth under this vial, whose symbol is scorching heat. While Napoleon was making and unmaking kings, there was great suffering. Look at the conscription in France. The very life blood of the land was drawn into the army. The married were torn from their homes; the natural protectors of widowed mothers and of orphan children were forced into the ranks. Every man who was able to carry a musket was compelled to live a soldier's life, and was exposed to a soldier's death. So great was the mortality in the campaigns of Napoleon, that at the close of his career there were nearly three times as many women as

men in France. And the sufferings of the countries that were invaded were even greater. They were left in desolation and ruins. Before the conqueror, there was a garden of Eden ; behind him, was a howling wilderness. His track through the world was marked by forsaken homes, and burned cities, and poverty, and starvation, and death. The lands which were visited by his armies were swept as bare as if they had been scorched with fire. This part of the symbol, then, receives its fulfillment. Men were scorched as if with great heat.

Did these sufferings lead men to repentance and to give glory to God ? To this question but one answer can be returned. There was no general turning to God. Men continued in the practice of their former sins. Cruelties, licentiousness and infidelity still disgraced society. But as we will have occasion to speak more at length of the continued impenitence and blasphemy of men under the visitations of God, when we come to consider the fifth vial, we may pass over these things for the present, with the remark that in spite of the sufferings of the fourth vial, "men blasphemed the name of God."

All the necessary conditions to a satisfactory explanation of the fourth vial are, therefore, fulfilled in the political changes which were accomplished by Napoleon. These changes were wrought in rulers and governments ; they closely followed the events shadowed forth under the previous vials ; they were attended with loss of life and great suffering ; they did not lead men to repentance and reformation. We have, therefore, reasonable grounds for supposing that these political changes, by which old dynasties were overthrown and new ones established, are the events shadowed forth when the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun.

II. We come now to THE FIFTH VIAL. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast ; and his kingdom was full of darkness ; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." The beast here referred to is the first beast of chapter XIII, the beast with seven heads and ten horns, which rose from the sea. The meaning of this symbol has already been explained. It is the symbol of the church of Rome. We will not now review the arguments by which this conclusion was reached. We will take it for granted that the arguments and the conclusion are correct. If the beast is the church of Rome, the seat or throne of the beast is the city of Rome. This city was the centre of the power of the Papal church, the throne from which it ruled the world. The calamity, then, shadowed forth by this vial was to fall with special force upon the city of Rome. In this respect, it differs from the calamities of the preceding vials. They were poured out upon the land, the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, and the sun, shadowing forth the calamities which were to fall upon the land ;



the commerce, fleets and maritime possessions of the kingdoms referred to; the kingdoms which abounded with rivers of water; and upon the rulers of those kingdoms. These calamities, therefore, touched and harmed only the outskirts of the Papal church; but the calamity shadowed forth by the fifth vial was to fall upon the city of Rome itself, the very seat of the beast.

This calamity was to be attended with great distress and suffering. The kingdom of the beast was to be filled with darkness. Darkness is a well known emblem of disorder and distress. And that there might be no mistake in this matter, we are further told that they gnawed their tongues with pain. The meaning of this expression cannot be misunderstood. It indicates great suffering and intense anguish. We are not, therefore, to look for a calamity which would be attended with great loss of life, for the symbol is not one of blood. We are to look for a calamity which would be attended with great distress and suffering, for the symbol is one of darkness and of men gnawing their tongues with pain.

This calamity would not be followed by repentance. Such a calamity should lead men to see their sins and to turn from them; but so great was their blindness and hardness of heart, that all was in vain. They still blasphemed the God of heaven.

Therefore, in looking for the fulfillment of the fifth vial, the following points must be taken into consideration. The event shadowed forth must follow soon after and be closely connected with the events shadowed forth by the previous vials. The calamity must fall with special force upon the city of Rome, for this city is the seat or throne of the power symbolized by the beast. It must be one of great distress and suffering. It would not turn men from their blasphemy to repentance. It would not be the final and complete overthrow of the beast, for this overthrow, we are expressly told, is to be completed under the seventh vial.

Let us now turn to history and see if we can find any event or events in which these conditions are fulfilled. After the battle of Wagram, in the year 1809, Napoleon issued his two famous decrees, one from Schoenbrunn, and the other from Vienna. By the former, the Pope's temporal authority over the Roman states was abolished; by the latter, Rome was incorporated with France, and made the second city of the empire. These we believe to be the first drops of the vial which were poured upon the seat of the beast. Of course, before this time, in the calamities shadowed forth under the previous vials, the Papal power had been crippled and weakened, but now Rome began to feel, more than ever before, the just judgments of the righteous God. These decrees of Napoleon did not continue long in force, for a few years afterwards his power was broken and the secular dominions of the pope were restored to him. But ever since that time the pope has been seated less securely on his throne and has had a less firm hold on the Catholic nations of the world. In France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, his

bulls have been laughed at, and the revenues of the church have been diverted. But all these things were only the first drops of the vial. In the year 1848 it began to be poured out more abundantly. By the revolution of that year the pope was driven from Rome by his own subjects, and a republic was established in the very city of the Papacy. The most of us have not entirely forgotten the events of that time as they were spread before us in the papers of the day. The pope was surrounded by troops in his own palace and compelled to obey their bidding. Who has forgotten the humiliation of his escape? Disguised as a German physician, under the cover of the darkness of midnight, in a private carriage which was waiting for him, carrying in his hand the golden ball which contained the sacred wafer, he fled from his own kingdom and found refuge among strangers. And though he was soon brought back and maintained on his throne by foreign bayonets, this was a blow from which the Papal power never recovered. And the vial was to be poured out yet more abundantly upon the seat of the beast. We need not trace the steps which have led to united Italy. They are yet fresh in our memory. One Papal state after another was wrested from the pope, until, in 1870, the soldiers of Victor Emanuel entered Rome and the pope was stripped of the last vestige of his temporal power. From that time Rome has been the capital of Italy, and the pope has been, so he asserts, the prisoner of the Vatican. In all these events, but especially the last, we see the fulfillment of the fifth vial. Ever since the year 1870 the pope has been stripped of his temporal power, which for many years before had been growing smaller and smaller. He has not now a soldier to enforce his decrees, or an acre of territory over which he can reign as king. The vial has been poured out upon the very throne of the beast, and under the outpouring of that vial that throne is crumbling into dust. We have, therefore, reasonable grounds for supposing that the symbol of the fifth vial is fulfilled in the reverses which have befallen the pope, reverses which have terminated in despoiling him of his temporal dominions.

But have these reverses been attended with darkness and with gnawing of tongues for pain? In other words, have they been attended with distress, disorder and suffering? In all these revolutions the revenue of the church has been crippled, and its property has been taken away. From these things the adherents of the Papal church have been in distress and darkness. They did not know what would befall them next. When they saw the property of the church taken away, the church weakened, the pope himself a fugitive and stripped of his temporal power, they in figurative language gnawed their tongues in pain and impotent rage. All this is too well known and of too recent date to require proof. The writings of the Roman Catholic church are full of expressions of distress and anger. Look at the contest which is now going on in Germany between the gov-

ernment and the Papal church ; look at the excitement in England over the pamphlet of Gladstone and the various replies it has called forth ; look at the anxiety which the leaders and members of that church everywhere manifest, and you will see that it is a condition exactly described in the words under consideration, "the kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain."

Have these reverses led the members of that church to repentance? Every one acquainted with the present attitude of that church will be ready to answer this question in the negative. They still continue to blaspheme the name of God. And their blasphemies are growing greater instead of less. What is blasphemy? It is not merely the improper use of the name of God ; it is claiming the powers and usurping the prerogatives of God. The church of Rome is guilty of blasphemy in the worship of images ; in giving to the pope the glory and honor which are due to God alone ; in claiming for him the power of pardoning sin, and other powers which belong alone to the King of kings and Lord of lords, and in the worship which it pays to saints and martyrs. To illustrate : Divine worship is paid to the Virgin Mary. Take these extracts from a manual of devotion, published in Rome in 1837, called "The daily tribute, or affectionate prayers and praises for every day in the week, to the immaculate Mother of God, the mother of mercy and refuge of sinners ; drawn from the works of the seraphic doctor Saint Bonaventura :—" "In thee, Oh lady, have I put my trust ; let me never be put to confusion. In thy grace uphold me. Thou art my strength and my refuge ; my consolation and protection. Unto thee have I cried, Oh lady, when my heart was in heaviness, and thou hast heard me from the tops of the everlasting hills. Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me ; for thou art my helper ; into thy hands, Oh lady, I commend my spirit ; my whole life and my last day. We praise thee, the mother of God ; we acknowledge thee, Mary the Virgin. All the earth doth worship thee, the spouse of the eternal Father. To thee all angels and archangels, to thee thrones and principalities do service. To thee the whole angelic creation, with never-ceasing voice, cry aloud, Holy, holy, holy mother, the parent of God, mother and Virgin. Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of the glory of the fruit of thy womb. The church throughout the world, by invoking thee, doth celebrate thee, the mother of the Divine Majesty."

Equally blasphemous is the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, which teaches that the Virgin Mary was not only free from actual sin, but also from all stain of original sin. This doctrine does not belong to the darkness of the middle ages. It was defined as an article of faith by the late pope, December 8, 1854. And this doctrine, which is so clearly contrary to the holy Scriptures, must be counted among the great blasphemies of the Roman church.

But the crowning blasphemy of that church is of still more recent date. On July 18, 1870, the Roman pontiff was declared infallible. The words of the decree are as follows: "We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed, that the Roman pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, in the discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his church should be endowed for defining doctrines regarding faith and morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman pontiffs are irreformable of themselves, and not by the consent of the church." American Encyclopedia, article *Infallibility*. As God alone is infallible, to claim this attribute for any mere man is blasphemy in the highest degree, which is not surpassed by any of which the Papal church was guilty in the darkest period of its history. In these things, as well as in others which might be mentioned, we have the fulfillment of the words under consideration, "They blasphemed the God of heaven." The reverses which fell upon the pope and the Papal states, instead of leading the members of that church to repentance, only led them to greater and still greater blasphemy.

But these events, supposed to be shadowed forth under the fifth vial, did not accomplish the final overthrow of that church. It still rules over the minds of multitudes and claims and exercises its spiritual power. Its final overthrow, when the last remnant of its spiritual power will be taken away, will not be till the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, and a voice from heaven proclaims, "It is done."

From these remarks, it is evident that all the necessary conditions of the symbol of the fifth vial are fulfilled in the reverses which befell the pope and the Roman states, and which terminated, in 1870, in stripping the pope of the last vestige of his temporal power. We have therefore reasonable ground for supposing that these reverses are the events shadowed forth by the angel pouring out his vial upon the seat of the beast.

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## LECTURE XLVI.

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### THE SIXTH VIAL.

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.—REV. 16: 12-14.

IF our theory of interpretation is correct, our exposition has brought us to the present time; and we must expect that the sixth and seventh vials will refer to events which are yet future. In our present lecture, therefore, we enter upon a new and important field. Heretofore we have investigated symbols which have been fulfilled; hereafter we are, for the most part, to investigate symbols which are yet to be fulfilled. In our past lectures we have traced the history of the world from the time of John till the present; in our future lectures we are to study the symbols which the Spirit has chosen to shadow forth the prominent events in the history of the world from the present till the end. As we turn from the fulfilled to the unfulfilled, it will be well to lay down some general principles for our government in our subsequent investigations.

1. In unfulfilled prophecy, there must be a resemblance between the symbols and the things symbolized. This is the case in all fulfilled prophecy. As we have compared the visions of the Apocalypse with the history of the world, we have been astonished, and sometimes startled, by the resemblance. And we have reason to believe that this resemblance will be as marked in unfulfilled prophecy as it has been in fulfilled.

2. The interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy is difficult. The interpretation of fulfilled prophecy is difficult enough; but how much greater must be the difficulties attending the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy! The symbols employed are so wisely chosen that they do not point with undoubted certainty to the events. It is only after the events that we can be certain as to their meaning. The difficulty in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy is seen in the whole history of the church. The prophecies concerning the Messiah appear to us very plain, but the Jews who lived before the incarnation found difficulty in interpreting them. The prophecies which have been fulfilled in the past history of the nations seem to us very plain, but the fathers found difficulty in interpreting them. We must, therefore, expect greater difficulties in interpreting that part of the Apocalypse which relates to the future, than we have experienced in interpreting that part which relates to the past.

3. The difficulty in interpreting unfulfilled prophecy arises mainly from the fact that in such interpretation we can no longer be guided by history. Heretofore our plan has been to explain the symbols, and then to compare them with well known historical facts; but in our future interpretations, this plan, for obvious reasons, cannot be followed.

4. In the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, we must speak with humble diffidence. This is no field for positive assertion. Those who have interpreted unfulfilled prophecy by declaring with all assurance the events which are to take place, and the time and manner of their occurrence, have again and again been put to shame. It is not for us to say how or when God will fulfill the symbols of the future. These times and

seasons are in his own hand. It becomes us, in our attempts to interpret unfulfilled prophecy, to speak with humble diffidence. If, in future lectures, we should seem to speak dogmatically and to say that God can fulfill his inspired symbols only in this way or in that, it will be because we have forgotten this obvious principle in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy.

5. We have abundant encouragement to study unfulfilled prophecy and to attempt its explanation. In the very opening of the Apocalypse, these encouraging words are written: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." And in this very vision it is said, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." The obvious meaning of these declarations is this: that man is blessed who watches for the fulfillment of these prophecies, who notes the indications of their approach, and who is prepared for the predicted events when they come. Surely, then, we have abundant encouragement to study unfulfilled prophecy and to attempt its explanation.

6. The plan to be pursued in interpreting unfulfilled prophecy is to study the symbols, to discover in what events they would receive a natural fulfillment, and then to suggest, in all humility, in what events they will probably be fulfilled. This is the plan we intend to follow. If any are expecting that we will predict the year when the world will come to an end, or the events which will certainly take place, and the time and manner of their occurrence, they will be disappointed. The failures which have attended such predictions in the past, and the unalterable conviction that man is unable to fathom the unfulfilled purposes of God, forbid such presumption. We will only study the symbols, and suggest their possible or probable fulfillment.

Bearing these principles in mind, we are ready to enter upon the exposition of the sixth vial, which carries us into the dark but not very remote future. The pouring out of this vial is described in verses 12-16. In these verses there are four points, which will be noticed in their order. 1. The drying up of the river Euphrates; 2. The frog-like spirits which issued out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet; 3. The note of warning; 4. The great gathering of Armageddon. The first two points will be sufficient to occupy our attention in the present lecture. In suggesting the events in which these symbols may be fulfilled, we will be guided by the natural meaning of these symbols, by the interpretation of similar symbols in prophecies which have been fulfilled, and by any other indication which God has given, either in the history of the past or in his holy word.

I. We are to notice THE DRYING UP OF THE RIVER EUPHRATES. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates;

and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." The Euphrates is a well known river of Asia to the east of Palestine. In the most prosperous days of Israel, it was the eastern boundary of the kingdom, and it separated the people of God from their enemies toward the rising of the sun. But the language of the verse before us cannot refer to the literal Euphrates, or to any literal drying up of that river; for then it would not be a symbol. In looking for the meaning of the symbol we are at once reminded of the vision contained in chapter 9: 13-21, in which the same river occupies a prominent place. In a previous lecture these verses were explained as referring to the Turkish power, which was let loose from the banks of the Euphrates, and which continued in its career of conquest for a prophetic hour, and day, and month, and year; that is, for about three hundred and ninety-one literal years. It was also shown that the symbols of the vision were satisfactorily fulfilled in the cavalry, the numbers, the uniform, the artillery and the standards of the Turkish army, and in the destruction which it wrought in the countries which it invaded. We will now take it for granted that these symbols were correctly explained. If the river Euphrates was the symbol of the Turkish power under the sixth trumpet, we are certainly justified in concluding that this river is the symbol of the same power under the sixth vial. And if the Euphrates is the symbol of the Turkish power, the drying up of that river would be the symbol of the gradual weakening and final destruction of that power. Though that power has not yet been destroyed, it is gradually growing weaker. In proof of this, we might review the history of the Ottoman empire for the last fifty years. The Greek insurrection, which resulted in the establishment of the kingdom of Greece, the rebellion and destruction of the Janizaries, the revolt of the Egyptian pasha, the Crimean war, and many other reverses have one after another crippled that great power which once ruled the East.\* But the best proof is to be found in the present condition of that empire. This condition is thus described by Alison, vol. 6, p. 5. "Generally speaking, the country is retrograde, and exhibits the usual and well known features of decaying societies. Roads there are none, except bridle paths, often impassable for any except daring horsemen; harbors choked up; walls falling into ruins; bridges broken down and never repaired; villages wholly deserted or consisting of a few huts among extensive ruins; rich plains in a state of nature, or traversed only by the wandering Arab, who seeks shelter in the remains of former magnificence, are the general features of the country. The Turkish empire is perishing, literally speaking, for want of

\* Stirring events have transpired in the East since these words were written. The Turco-Russian war, which humbled the pride and weakened the power of the Sultan, has passed into history. The treaty of Berlin furnishes unmistakable evidence that the mystical Euphrates is drying up; and thus becomes a marvelous interpreter of this vision of the Apocalypse.

inhabitants; and while the philosophers of Europe were contemplating with dread the productive powers of the overflowing inhabitants, the travelers in Asia were anticipating the entire disappearance of the human race in the regions where it was first created, and where the most ample means were provided for its increase. The Ottoman domains present from day to day a wide void for anarchy and barbarism to rule in territories without inhabitants, tribes without rulers, plains without culture. No foreign interposition is necessary to complete its downfall; it is working out its own ruin; the colossus is falling without even a hand being stretched forth to hurl it to the ground. The population, thrown back upon itself, is expiring from its own impotence; in many places, it no longer exists. The Mussulman race is reduced to nothing in the sixty thousand square leagues which compose its immense and fertile domain. Except in the capital and a few great cities, there is scarcely a Turk to be seen. The conquered races have generally increased, while the conquering is daily disappearing."

From this description in the calm narrative of the historian, whose accuracy may be relied on, it will be seen that the Turkish empire is drying up, and that its Sultan deserves the name which a few years ago was so often applied to him, "The Sick Man of the East." Therefore, the present condition, and the past history of the Turkish empire, as well as the natural meaning of the symbol we are now considering, leads us to expect that the time is coming when that empire will be utterly destroyed. The symbolical river Euphrates is to be dried up; it will no longer occupy the prominent place which it has filled in the political geography of the world.

The reason for the drying up of the river is, that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared. The figure is no doubt suggested by the drying up of the Red sea and the Jordan before the advancing hosts of Israel. A river without bridges and without fords is an obstacle in the way of travelers and of an army; and the drying up of such a river would naturally symbolize the removal of such an obstacle. Applying this natural interpretation to the case in hand, what would the symbols under consideration lead us to expect? The Euphrates is a symbol of the Turkish empire. This empire is an obstacle or barrier in the way of the kings of the East. But this kingdom is overthrown, and in this overthrow the obstacle or barrier is taken away and the way of the kings of the East is prepared. But who are meant by the kings of the East? Some expositors reply to this question by saying that the kings of the East are the Jews, and they explain the words before us as a prediction that the Jews are to return and take possession of Palestine, which the Turkish power has held for so many years. But the scattered Jews are nowhere called kings. They are rather described by such expressions as this of the prophet, "a nation scattered and peeled." Nor will the Jews, even if they are to be gathered in the



land of their fathers, which I am not willing to admit, come exclusively from the East. They will come from the North, and South, and East, and West, from all the lands in which they are wanderers. For these reasons, the phrase, "the kings of the East," cannot be descriptive of the Jews. It is more natural to suppose that the kings of the East are the kings whose homes and kingdoms are in the East. We know that the kings and peoples of the earth will one day be converted to Christianity, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Kings shall become nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. Scores of other promises of a similar character will suggest themselves to your memory. But in the East, the great obstacle to this conversion to Christianity has been the Turkish power. It has persecuted and put to death those who believed in Jesus. It has done everything it could do to hinder the spread of the true religion. If that power was entirely dried up, we have reason to believe that the great hindrance in the way of the progress of Christianity in the East would be removed; that missionary operations would be more successful; and that the kings of the East, followed by their people, would enter the spiritual kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

This is the most natural interpretation of this part of the vision. The Ottoman empire, either from internal weakness, or from external foes, or from both, is to fall to pieces. With its fall, the great obstacle in the way of missionary enterprise in the East will be removed, and those nations which have long been in bondage will be blessed with the freedom wherewith Christ makes his people free. No barrier will be in the way of the kings of the East as they return and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy. The obvious meaning of the symbols employed, the history of the past, and the outlook of the future all lead us to believe that this is the correct interpretation of the words, "the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared."

II. We were to notice THE THREE FROG-LIKE SPIRITS, which issued from the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." The symbols are here plainly described. In appearance they were like frogs. Although frogs are not spoken of elsewhere in the Scriptures as a symbol, they are among men generally regarded as symbols of pollution, of loquacity, of unreasoning complaint, and of pride; and we may expect that the things symbolized

by them will be distinguished by some or all of these characteristics. These frogs are described as spirits, as unclean spirits, and as the spirits of devils. They would not, therefore, properly be symbols of persons, but of systems, opinions, or influences. And we may expect that the systems, opinions, or influences, symbolized by them, will be unclean and devilish; that is, they will be unholy, hostile to the true religion, and enemies of God and his church.

The first of these unclean spirits came out of the mouth of the dragon. While we may be in doubt as to the meaning of the frog-like spirit which came out of the mouth of the dragon, we cannot be in doubt as to the meaning of the dragon, for this symbol is explained in chapter 12: 9. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." The dragon is the symbol of Satan. In the lecture in which the vision of the beautiful woman, whose child was caught up into heaven, and who was compelled to flee into the wilderness, was discussed, it was shown that the special power of Satan, which was there symbolized, was the persecuting power of pagan Rome, which was, without question, under the direction of the devil. But it is manifest that Satan, who deceives the whole world, is not only the god of paganism, strictly so called, but also the god of infidelity of every form, in its widest sense, in Christian as well as pagan lands. And this infidelity we believe to be the frog-like spirit which issued from the mouth of the dragon. The frog-like spirit would be an appropriate symbol of such a spirit of infidelity. Infidelity is unclean, for infidels in Christian and in pagan lands are unholy in their lives. It is proud and boastful, for infidel science claims to know more of the works of God in nature and in providence, than God himself. It is devilish, for it exerts itself to build up the kingdom of Satan, and to overthrow the kingdom of Christ. Without any question, it proceeds from Satan, for it is not one of the fruits of the Spirit, it is not one of the good and perfect gifts which come down from the Father of lights. We may, therefore, conclude that the frog-like spirit which issued from the mouth of the dragon is the spirit of infidelity.

The symbol would lead us to believe that there is to be in that future time which is here referred to, a great increase of infidelity. Satan is to send forth instruments of infidelity, which will swarm over the world, as the frogs swarmed over the land of Egypt during the prevalence of the second plague; and by these instruments he is to make a mighty effort to stay the progress of Christianity and to overthrow the kingdom of Christ in the world. Are there any indications that such a time is coming? This question, every man who is acquainted with the progress of modern thought must answer in the affirmative. In pagan lands, the old pagan forms of infidelity seem to be galvanized into new life. This is noticeably the case in India, where the religion of Buddha is wonderfully revived.

But it is in Christian lands that the activity of the spirit of infidelity is especially noticeable. Men have attacked the Christian system at every point. They have sought to prove that there is no inspired word, no miracles to attest its inspiration, no Saviour and no God. Infidel writings are to be found everywhere. They are in our book stores, in our libraries, in our homes, and on our tables. They cover the land as the frogs did the land of Egypt. By means of books, lectures, newspapers, and periodicals, infidel sentiments are spreading in all directions, and the youth of Christendom are in danger of pollution. If the same rate of progress is maintained for the next century which has been maintained for the last century, the result will be fearful to contemplate. This we believe to be the meaning of the frog-like spirit which issued from the mouth of the dragon. Some time in the future Satan will send out the spirit of infidelity and make a final and terrible attack on Christianity.

The second frog-like spirit issued from the mouth of the beast. The beast with seven heads and ten horns, which is first introduced to our notice in chapter XIII, is a symbol of the Papal church. This has already been proven with sufficient clearness. Though the fifth vial was poured out upon the seat of the beast, and though, under the outpouring of that vial, the Papal church suffered great reverses, yet it was not entirely destroyed. Its final destruction will not be till the seventh vial is poured out. And the symbol under consideration leads us to expect that some time in the future that church will put forth a new and mighty effort to stay the progress of Christianity and to overthrow the true church of Christ. And there are indications that such a time is approaching. The zeal of the leaders and members of that church, its missionary activity, its proselyting spirit, and the ritualistic tendencies which, proceeding from it, have invaded evangelical churches, convince us that Rome will not fall till she has made one more mighty attempt to gain the supremacy. This we believe to be the meaning of the frog-like spirit which issued from the mouth of the beast. Some time in the future, and there are indications that such a time is approaching, the Papal church will send forth anew its anti-Christian spirit, and make a final and terrible attack upon Christianity.

The third frog-like spirit issued from the mouth of the false prophet. This is the first introduction of the false prophet under this name upon the scene of the Apocalyptic visions; though there is reason to believe he was introduced to our notice under the symbol of the falling star of chapter IX; for there is no opinion so probable as that which makes the false prophet Mohammed, or the Mohammedan power. And the symbol under consideration leads us to expect that some time in the future the Mohammedan power, mustering all its expiring strength for one last struggle, will make a final and terrible attack upon Christianity: This we believe to be the meaning of the frog-like spirit which issued from the mouth of the false prophet.

These three frog-like spirits, viz., the spirit of infidelity, the spirit of popery, and the spirit of Mohammedanism, would work miracles, that is, lying miracles. This would be no new thing in their history, for they have always claimed miraculous power. Their great mission would be to array the kings and nations of the earth for the conflict which is yet to be between Christianity and all opposing systems, and which is described as the "battle of that great day of God Almighty." Of this battle, we will have occasion to speak when we come to consider the gathering at Armagedden.

Space will not permit us to speak at greater length of the three frog-like spirits, which issued from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, but we have indicated with sufficient clearness what we believe to be shadowed forth by these symbols. Some time in the future, the spirit of infidelity, the spirit of popery, and the spirit of Mohammedanism will unite in making a final and terrible attack upon Christianity. The members of the true church of Christ should be prepared for that attack by studying what God has revealed concerning it. They can wait for the attack with confidence, for they have the promise which can never fail, that no weapon which is formed against the church shall prosper, and that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

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## LECTURE XLVII.

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### THE SIXTH VIAL—CONTINUED.

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.—REV. 16: 15, 16.

WE are still engaged in the exposition of the sixth vial. In this exposition we have reached the third division, viz.:

III. THE NOTE OF WARNING. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." These are the words of Christ. The great object of this note of warning is to lead the saints to be ever watching. There are three comings of Christ, which are yet future, and for which we are to be watching. There is his coming in desolating judgments. "Thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." There is his coming at death. "In such an hour as ye

think not, the Son of man cometh." There is his coming at the last day to judge the world. "He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation." We have to decide, from the context, to which of these comings any particular passage refers. The passage now under consideration seems to refer to the Saviour's coming in desolating judgments. It does not refer to his coming at the end of the world, for the end of the world is not to be under the sixth vial. It does not refer to his coming at the death of the individual Christian, for in this respect it would be no more applicable to this particular period of the church than to any other. Therefore, it must refer to the Saviour's coming in desolating judgments. And the context points to a time of desolating judgments. Infidelity, popery and Mohammedanism were to combine against Christianity. The conflict was to be fierce. It is described as "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." We cannot expect that battle to be decided without sore suffering. Many of the saints will fall before the power of the enemy and seal their testimony with their blood. It was the duty of the saints to watch for this great day of the Lord Almighty, when the Saviour would come in desolating judgments as a thief in the night. One peculiarity of these comings of Christ will be that they are sudden and unexpected. The figure we are now considering is a common one in the Scriptures. Jesus himself said, when he was here on earth, "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not in what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." Paul says, "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." Our Lord says to the church in Sardis, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." And the same Lord says, in the verse before us, "Behold, I come as a thief."

Christ comes as a thief when he comes in death. Though we know that we must die, though the lesson of our mortality is repeated in the word and in providence till we are as familiar with it as with the alphabet, yet, after all, death comes upon us suddenly and unexpectedly. Christ will come as a thief when he comes at the end of the world. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of man. Men will be eating, and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage until the Saviour appears in the clouds of heaven. Christ comes in his judgments as a thief. While men are expecting prosperity, sudden calamity cometh like a whirlwind. And the Saviour, in this note of warning, assures us that he will come in this sudden and unexpected manner when he comes in those judgments which will visit the earth during the great and final conflict between the true church and the combined forces of infidelity, and popery, and Mohammedanism.

And because he always comes in this way, "blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." The figure which underlies these words is a peculiar and expressive one. A man careless in the presence of danger lays aside his garments and betakes himself to slumber. While he sleeps, a thief comes and takes away his garments. When he awakes, he is compelled to go on his journey unclothed, and he is an object of laughter and shame. So the Christian pilgrim should walk in spotless raiment. If he is careless, the great enemy will come and steal his raiment while he sleeps. The same truth may be expressed by another figure. The Christian is a soldier in an enemy's country. If he lacks in watchfulness, the enemy will come and steal his armor while he sleeps, and he will be left powerless against his foes. These figures show the necessity of watchfulness and the blessedness of him who watches and keeps his garments; for such a one is never taken by surprise; he is never left to walk in nakedness; he is never put to shame.

This note of warning is one to which we do well to take heed. When Christ comes the second time without sin unto salvation, he will come as a thief. Those who are then alive on the earth will not be looking for his coming. It is not probable that any of us will be among the living on that day, for the signs of the times do not indicate its speedy approach; though, of course, in this we may be mistaken. His coming may be sooner than we think. But his coming to us at the hour of death, which will be in effect his last coming, so far as we are concerned, will be that of a thief in the night. If we are not on our guard, that coming will find us unprepared. Our business will be unsettled; our duties will be unfinished; our souls will be unsaved. We know not in what form death may come to call us. It may be by accident, or by sharp disease, or by lingering sickness. Knowing that death is the most certain, and yet the most uncertain of all events, let us watch and keep our garments, lest we walk naked and are put to shame. But this note of warning should be especially heeded by us who live at this particular period of the world's history. If our theory of interpretation is correct, we are approaching the time when the conflict will be joined between the church and the spirits which issue from the mouth of the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet. Before we are aware of it, the noise of that battle may startle us from our security. It may be that the opposing hosts are even now marshalling. It does seem as if infidelity, under the guise of philosophy and science falsely so called, and popery, and Mohammedanism, are girding on their armor. Are we ready for the battle? Have we made ourselves familiar with the tactics of the foe? Are we aware that infidel philosophy and science are trying to undermine the foundations of Christianity? Are we aware that popery is exerting itself to the utmost to hold the power it has so long exercised over the bodies and souls of men? Are we aware that Mohammedanism seems to

be gathering up all its remaining strength for one more desperate struggle? Unless we and the church are aware of these things, we will be taken at a disadvantage. There is, therefore, need for us to lay this note of warning to heart. In view of the sudden and unexpected coming of Christ at the day of judgment; in view of his sudden and unexpected coming at death; in view of his sudden and unexpected coming in calamity; in view of his sudden and unexpected coming in the approaching conflict between Christianity and all opposing errors, which will try the souls of the saints; how carefully should we ponder these words, and how diligently should we put them in practice, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

IV. We come now to the fourth point in the vision of the sixth vial, viz., THE GATHERING AT ARMAGEDDON. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." In our version, it is said "*he* gathered them." The meaning would seem to be that God, or the sixth angel, or Satan gathered them. But some of the best Biblical critics had, for grammatical reasons, translated the clause, "they gathered them." And now, in the standard manuscripts which have recently been brought to light, it is found that the correct reading is, "they gathered them." This reading makes the meaning plain. They, that is, the three spirits which proceeded out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, gathered them, that is, the kings and peoples of the earth, into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. The explanation of verses 13 and 14, already given, must be borne in mind. There is to be a great conflict between truth and error. Infidelity, popery and Mohammedanism are to make a final and desperate attack upon the church. In this attack, the enemies of the church are to be gathered and marshalled under the leadership of the three frog-like spirits which issued from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The attack is to be fierce and furious, for it is to be the battle of the great day of God Almighty. We are not told in this passage how the battle would result, but we may be sure of this: that the truth will triumph, and that the church, under the leadership of her Great King, will come off victorious. So much seems plain; but, when we are told that this conflict is to be in a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon, we are met by a difficulty over which many a reader and expositor of the Apocalypse has stumbled. Armageddon! Where is it? What is it? We look back over the pages of Jewish history and we can find no such place as Armageddon mentioned. But when we examine the word more closely, we find that it is composed of two Hebrew words, *ar* and *megiddo*. The Hebrew word *ar* means "a hill or country." Therefore the word Armageddon is equivalent to this: "the hill or country of Megiddo." Is

there any hill or country of this name mentioned in the Old Testament? Those who are acquainted with the history of the kingdom of Israel, and with the geography of the Holy Land, will at once recognize a familiar name, and discover the key which unlocks the meaning of the riddle. There is a plain stretching across central Palestine, from the Mediterranean sea on the west to the Jordan on the east, about fifteen or twenty miles wide, called the plain of Jezreel, or the plain of Esdraelon. This plain was the great battle field of the Jewish nation. On it many of their grandest victories were achieved; on it they suffered some of their most disastrous defeats; on it some of their greatest warriors gave up the ghost. It was watered with the best blood of Israel and of Israel's enemies. The cities in and about this plain are celebrated for the battles which have been fought around their walls. In the centre, there is Bethshean; on the north, there is Tabor; on the south, there are Gilboa, Endor and Jezreel; and on the west, there are Taanach and Megiddo.

Let us refer to the first great battle which made this plain celebrated in Jewish history. The Canaanites were not entirely exterminated by Joshua. After the death of that great leader, the Israelites fell into idolatry, and the Canaanites were permitted to oppress them. Very soon after the death of Joshua, the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, the captain of whose hosts was Sisera. The bondage of Israel was sore. All their weapons were taken from them, so that there was not a spear or a shield to be seen among forty thousand in Israel. Jabin had hundreds of chariots of iron and abundance of the munitions of war. For twenty years he oppressed Israel. When the twenty years drew to an end, and Israel cried to the Lord for deliverance, a deliverer was raised up. Under the palm of Bethel lived Deborah. She sends for Barak, and they take counsel together. The tribes are summoned and some of them obey. The place of gathering was mount Tabor, on the north side of this plain of Esdraelon. In the meantime, Jabin hears of the rebellion, and sends Sisera at the head of the Canaanite host to crush it. They encamp beside the waters of Megiddo. Deborah and Barak watch them from the summit of Tabor; and when the appointed time arrives, Barak with his ten thousand men comes down from the mountain, and marches directly west across the plain of Esdraelon towards Megiddo, which was distant about twelve miles. As they drew near the Canaanite encampment, and just as the battle was joined, a furious storm of sleet and hail swept across the plain from the east, driving full in the faces of the Canaanites. They were crippled by the biting cold. Their archers and swordsmen were almost powerless. But the Israelites, having the storm in their backs, were not greatly disturbed by it, and they were encouraged by the consciousness that they were receiving providential aid. They felt and saw that the stars in their courses were fighting against Sisera. The rain which



descended turned the plain into a swamp, and the horses and iron chariots of Sisera, on which he relied for victory, sank helplessly in the morass. The little streams of Megiddo and the river Kishon, into which they emptied, became raging torrents and swept away horse and rider together. All this is described in the inspired song, Judges 5 : 21, 22. The great army of Jabin was utterly defeated. They broke and fled in all directions, with the thousands of Barak furiously following. Never was an army more thoroughly routed. Sisera himself perished by the hand of Jael, the wife of Heber. Day after day of expectation passed away, while the mother of Sisera and the princesses of the court watched eagerly from the windows of the palace for the return of their loved ones, before a very few fugitives came to tell of the disastrous defeat of Megiddo.

And this was but the first of many battles which made the plain of Esdraelon, the land of Megiddo, famous in history. Here Gideon wrought his great victory. Here Saul and Jonathan were overthrown. Here Ahaziah was defeated. Here Josiah met Pharaoh Nechoh, king of Egypt, and was slain. Therefore, Megiddo would be to the Jew what Marathon was to the Greek, Waterloo to the English and Gettysburg to us. It would be more to the Jew, because it was the field of many decisive battles, while each of the other places mentioned was the scene of but one decisive battle. To the Jew, and to every one acquainted with Jewish history, Megiddo would be the emblem of any great and decisive battle. We often make use of similar expressions, and no one misunderstands their meaning. We say of any political or moral conflict, in which one side suffers a disastrous defeat, it was a Waterloo. Now John was a Jew, and he was writing for those who were more or less familiar with Jewish history and geography; and when he says that the conflict between the church and its great enemies was to be another field of Megiddo, he means that this conflict was to be as decisive in its results as that which terminated in the utter rout of Sisera and his hosts.

Therefore, for the fulfillment of this part of the vision, we need not expect the contending hosts to meet on the plain of Esdraelon, or on the field of Waterloo, or in any particular locality. We need only expect a great and decisive moral conflict, which will be, in the Hebrew tongue, a Megiddo, and, in the English tongue, a Waterloo, in the moral world. Nor is it necessary to expect that this conflict will be waged with the sword or with weapons of literal warfare. While there may be bloodshed, and fighting armies arrayed against each other, this conflict is to be, for the most part, one of opinion. It is to be a moral conflict. It is to be fought with intellectual swords, and not with swords of steel. Christianity on the one side, and infidelity, popery and Mohammedanism on the other, are to contend for the victory. It is to be the fight of truth against error, that old fight which has been going on in the world since the beginning; but it is

no longer to be carried on on the battle fields of earth, but in the high places of intellectual activity.

For this moral and spiritual battle of Armageddon, which is to decide the supremacy of truth for ever, the hosts are now gathering. We see this gathering in the various forms which infidelity has assumed, and in the violent attacks it is making upon Christianity. We see it in the increased activity of the Roman Catholic church. We see it in the mustering hosts of Christianity and in the closer union which is everywhere being formed between those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. The unclean spirits which issued from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are gathering their hosts, and the Great Captain of our salvation is gathering his faith-girded warriors for the battle of Armageddon, which will decide who is to be the governor of the world. In that battle we must act our part, we are acting our part; for though the fighting may not actually have begun, the preparations and the preliminary skirmishes are in progress, and Christ expects every man to do his duty. And what is our duty? First of all, to know the truth of Christianity; then to know the strength of the enemy, and then to strike for our freedom, our faith and our God. Thus doing, the coming conflict, which is even now upon us, will be a field of Megiddo, a moral Waterloo, in which the stars in their courses, and the forces of nature, and heaven itself, will fight for the church, and in which the dragon, the beast and the false prophet will be put to utter rout.

## LECTURE XLVIII.

### THE SEVENTH VIAL.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.—REV. 16: 17–21.

THE seventh vial, like the sixth, has reference to the future. In the words which describe the pouring out of this vial, the events of the future are briefly described; in some of the following chapters the same events are described in greater detail. These events must follow the events

described under the previous vial. In our exposition of that vial we saw that there was to be a great conflict between truth and error. Christianity on the one hand, and infidelity, popery and Mohammedanism on the other, were to fight for the supremacy. This battle is to be a decisive one. It is to be, in the Hebrew tongue, a moral Megiddo, and in the English tongue, a moral Waterloo. Under the seventh vial we are to trace the history of the world after this gathering at Armageddon. We are to see the conflict between the two opposing armies, and the decisive result. We are to follow the progress of the battle until the enemies of the church are overthrown and everything is prepared for the introduction of the millennium. As has been said, the progress and result of the great battle are very briefly sketched in the verses before us. For a full description we must wait till we reach the visions of the following chapters. And in these verses the events of the future are described in figurative language. Though the symbols employed will be plain enough after the events which they shadow forth, yet now they are so dark that we must enter upon their explanation with many a doubt and fear. When we attempt to describe what shall be when the seventh angel pours out his vial, it becomes us to speak with diffidence. We will not try to foretell what shall be. We will only mention the events in which these symbols may be fulfilled, and in which the laws of symbolic interpretation lead us to believe they will probably be fulfilled.

"The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air." In this respect it differs from the preceding vials. One was poured upon the land; another upon the sea; another upon the rivers and fountains of waters; another upon the sun; another upon the seat of the beast; another upon the river Euphrates; but this one is poured out into the air. If there is a significance in the localities on which the preceding vials were poured out, we may well suppose that there is significance in the fact that the seventh vial was poured out into the air. What is that significance? The effect of each of the other vials was confined to a particular locality; the effect of the seventh vial is to be universal; for the atmosphere into which it was poured surrounds the whole world as a garment. It touches the land and the sea, the streams and the fountains of waters, the seat of the beast and the river Euphrates. Therefore, we must expect that the judgments which the seventh vial shadows forth will visit every land and every people. Those who live in the city of Rome, and in the villages in which the influence of Rome is least powerful; those who wander in the desert, and who go down to the sea in ships; those who hew down the forests and who plow the soil; those who shiver in the cold of the north, and who bask in tropical sunshine; all those who breathe the free air of heaven are to feel the effects of the seventh vial, for it is poured out into the air. Any explanation which confines this vision to a particular locality must come short of the truth.

And the fulfillment of this vision is not only to be world-wide—it is a vision of peculiar solemnity. It is introduced by “a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne.” None of the preceding vials is thought worthy of such an introduction. Under the seventh vial there are to be such divine judgments and such manifestations of the divine glory, that the voice from the heavenly temple announces its outpouring. This is the heavenly temple which has occupied such a prominent place in all the previous visions of this book—the temple whose courts were at times thronged with the holy angels and with redeemed saints. Lest we might think that this might be the voice of an angel or a saint, we are expressly told that it came from the throne. It must be the voice of God himself. This divine voice proclaimed the startling words, “It is done,” words which remind us of the similar voice which was once heard just without the walls of ancient Jerusalem, announcing to the universe, “It is finished.” You know from whose lips this cry came; you know what work it was which was then finished. And we may well believe that when this same divine person cries again, “It is done,” he must refer to some great work, which is worthy to be compared with the work of redemption, whose finishing called forth the last cry from the cross. What was this work which called forth this cry from the temple, and which was to be finished when the seventh vial was poured out? It was the complete overthrow of the enemies of the church, and the final victory of the church. Surely this is a victory second only to the Saviour’s victory over death and sin. For century after century the struggle had been going on. Satan and his hosts seemed to be an equal match, and sometimes more than an equal match for the church. But at last the decisive battle was to be fought, and when that battle was ended the church, throughout all the unknown centuries of its future history, would be left without a foe. It was of this victory the Saviour spake on his cross, for his death made it possible, and opened the way for achieving it. It is of the same final and complete victory the Saviour speaks from his throne, when he says, “It is done.” And yet we are not to suppose that this victory has already been gained when the seventh vial begins to be poured out. The first outpouring of this vial was but the beginning of the end. It was now as it had been when the Saviour cried on the cross. When he said “It is finished,” the work of redemption was not entirely finished. He had yet to die, and to be buried, and to be raised from the dead. But the end of that work was so near and so certain, that he spake of it as already accomplished. So in the present instance. The overthrow of the combined forces of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet is so near and so certain, that the voice from the throne speaks of it as already accomplished. “It is done.” This series of judgments is about to be finished. The persecution of the saints is about to be finished. The dominion of the beast is to come to an end for ever and ever.

Let this announcement from the heavenly temple arouse our expectations. Glorious things have been spoken of the church in the past, but none so glorious as this. Great victories have been wrought by the church and for the church in the past, but the greatest of all is the one which is brought before us in the symbols we are now considering. Let us take up these symbols, one by one, and see if we can discover their probable or possible fulfillment.

1. The first thing which attracted the apostle's attention when the seventh vial was poured out was "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings." These are no new symbols to us. We have seen and heard them again and again, as we have studied the visions of the Apocalypse. We cannot, therefore, be at a loss as to their meaning. We have seen their meaning in the visions which have been fulfilled, and we cannot be wrong if we suppose their meaning in this vision of the future is similar to their meaning in the visions of the past. In chapter IV, John saw through the open door of heaven the throne of God and the glory by which that throne was surrounded. And he tells us, "out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices." So in chapter 11 : 19, which introduces a new series of visions, he tells us, "the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testimony, and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings." In both these passages, "voices, thunders and lightnings" were symbols of the divine presence and majesty. They remind us of the sublime scene on Sinai, where "there were thunderings, and lightnings, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud." They remind us of the grand description of the divine presence and majesty which is contained in Psalm 18. They indicate that God, whose voice is omnipotent, who rides upon the clouds, and who dwells in light that is inaccessible, is about to manifest himself in great and terrible works. So in the present instance, the voices, and the thunders, and the lightnings, are evidences of the divine presence, and they indicate that God is about to manifest himself in a peculiar manner. We know from the context what God is about to do. He is to lead his church to the final victory, and to destroy the church's foes. We must therefore expect an unusual victory on the part of the church, and an unusual destruction on the part of the church's enemies. It is to be a destruction more terrible than that which visited the cities of the plain. It is to be a victory more complete than the church has ever yet gained.

2. The next symbol which appeared when the seventh vial was poured out was "a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth." This symbol has been explained in the visions which have been considered. An earthquake is a symbol of commotions, rebellions and political changes. It is a natural and appropriate symbol of these things. When an earthquake comes, homes and temples are overthrown, rocks are rent, hills sink out of sight, plains are lifted into mountain ranges, islands appear where there was

nothing but a wide expanse of water before, and the whole face of nature is changed. Surely, then, an earthquake is an appropriate symbol of commotions, rebellions and political changes. Therefore, when the opening of the sixth seal shadowed forth the time when pagan Rome was to become Christian Rome, and when there was to be an entire change in the rulers and the government, this change is symbolized by a great earthquake. And we must expect that the earthquake, which made its appearance when the seventh vial was poured out, shadows forth great commotions and changes on the earth; and that the commotions and changes shadowed forth are unusually great, for we are told that such an earthquake "was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." Though there have been great revolutions in centuries past, the revolution which is to be during the time covered by the seventh vial is to be one of unparalleled magnitude. If our theory of interpretation is correct, we can readily see that at the time referred to there are to be great changes. Infidelity, popery, and Mahomedanism are to be overthrown. The combined forces under the command of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are to be destroyed. The true church is to be supreme. When all this comes to pass, our earth will be a new earth. When all infidelity, as ashamed hides its head, when all the adherents of the church of Rome are delivered from their superstitions and their errors, when all the followers of Mohammed turn with true hearts to the great prophet of all ages, those who were familiar with the past history of the world will hardly recognize it in its new regeneration. When all mosques and temples of idolatry are thrown down, when all infidel institutions become teachers of a true faith, when all lands are covered with Christian churches, when all homes are sanctified by Christian altars, when all men will journey toward Zion, with their faces thitherward, there will be such a change from the present as could be wrought only by such a moral earthquake as has not been since men lived on the earth.

3. The next symbol which appeared when the seventh vial was poured out is thus described: "The great city was divided into three parts." The city here spoken of is the same city which has been brought to our notice in previous visions. It is the great city of mystical Babylon, the city called Sodom and Egypt. It has already been shown that this city is the church of Rome. We will not now repeat the arguments by which this conclusion was reached. We will take it for granted that those arguments were correct. This part of the vision, then, foretells the fact that the time is coming when the church of Rome will be divided into three parts. What does this mean? You will remember that the first beast which came up out of the sea and which was interpreted as a symbol of the church of Rome, had ten horns and ten crowns. These ten horns and ten crowns were explained as symbolizing ten nations which were immedi-

ately under the authority of the church of Rome. But the vision we are now considering, asserts that by and by this tenfold division will be done away with, and that a threefold division will take its place. What this division will be, we cannot now conjecture. If we were to judge from present appearances, we might say that the three parts into which the city was to be divided, in other words, the three great nations which were to uphold the Papal power, would be France, Spain and Italy; but a few more campaigns such as those which have recently deluged Europe with blood would change the whole face of the political geography of the continent. This much seems to be certain. There are to be such political changes that when the seventh vial is poured out, there will be three great upholders of the Papal power. The city will be divided into three parts. This division is somehow to be an element of weakness. The three parts will not present a solid front. The church of Rome will be a house divided against itself. All this is manifest from what follows. Recent events in France, Spain and Italy, seem to confirm this interpretation. Though they are prominent in supporting the church of Rome, there is such a lack of harmony that the downfall of the power they are upholding seems to be approaching.

4. The next symbol which appears when the seventh vial was poured out was this: "The cities of the nations fell." Many nations which are not upholders of the Roman power have in them strongholds of that power. This is the case in Germany, in England, and in our own land. These strongholds are in the words under consideration called "cities of the nations"; and when the seventh vial is poured out, when the Roman power is divided, and when through this division it trembles on the verge of destruction, these cities of the nations will fall. We can readily see how this is to be. When the head is smitten, the limbs will be paralyzed. If the Roman pontiff loses his prestige and power in Europe, if the nations which have all along supported him are destroyed, the adherents of that church in every land will be powerless. This vial, then, is not to be poured out merely on the seat of the beast, it is to be poured out upon the whole world, wherever a worshiper of the beast is to be found. The great city itself is to be divided to its fall; and then all the cities of the nations, all churches and institutions, which have for their object the glory of the Papal church, will fall.

5. The next symbol which appears when the seventh vial is poured out is thus described: "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Here again mystical Babylon is brought to our notice. The typical meaning of this city is too well fixed in our minds to require any explanation in the present connection. As we look back over the history of the church, it seems as if Babylon, the great enemy of true Christianity, had been

overlooked. It has been permitted to carry on its abominations, to teach its false doctrines, to worship its idols, to pervert the word of God, and to persecute the saints, as if God did not see. But at the time referred to in this vision, its case would be brought to God's remembrance. It would be called up for punishment. The long suspended judgment would be inflicted. God would give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. This figure we have had more than once in our previous lectures. It is that of giving a cup of poison to a criminal who was in this way to meet the extreme penalty of the law. Babylon was guilty before God, guilty of capital crime. For a long time, divine patience had borne with her, but now that patience was exhausted; the sentence was to be executed at once. The poisoned cup of divine wrath is put into her hand and she is compelled to drink. If it is asked just how mystical Babylon is to be destroyed, we must reply, we cannot tell. Whether it will be by the shock of contending armies, or by the mightier shock of intellectual warfare, God only knows; but he has infinite resources at his command, and when he selects a punishment, it will be appropriate and adequate. The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, of whatever ingredients it may be composed, will be sufficient to accomplish the purpose he intended to accomplish. And when mystical Babylon puts this cup to her lips, her doom is sealed, for there is poison in the cup.

6. The next symbol which appears when the seventh vial is poured out is thus described: "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." This symbol shadows forth great and terrible judgments. So fierce was to be the wrath of God, that the inanimate creation would desire to escape from his presence. It has sometimes been the case, that during great earthquakes in the natural world, islands have disappeared and the mountains have been leveled. So in the great moral earthquake, the whole earth will be convulsed. Institutions and theories which have long been established, and which seemed as stable as the everlasting hills, will be shaken from their foundations and be removed out of their places. This symbol, in connection with the preceding ones, must lead us to expect that the destruction of the enemies of the church will be full of fearfulness.

7. The last symbol which appears when the seventh vial is poured out is thus described: "There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." This symbol is in such perfect keeping with all the other symbols of this vision, that it requires little explanation. A hail storm, like an earthquake, is a symbol of great calamity. The calamity suggested by this hail storm is to be one of unusual severity, for it was to be such a storm as has not been since men lived on the earth. Every stone was about the weight of



a talent, that is, in round numbers, a hundred pounds. If such a hail storm should ever burst upon the world, a storm in which every hail stone weighed about a hundred pounds, it would be an hour of destruction and terror. It would be more destructive than the heaviest cannonading. Human homes and military fortifications would afford no protection. And though we are not to expect such a literal storm, the judgments which this figurative storm shadows forth, would be full of horror and destruction. And yet, strange to say, these judgments would not lead the enemies of God to repentance. But why should we call their hardness of heart strange? From the time of Pharaoh until the present, unbelievers have only grown worse under the judgments of the Most High. In spite of these terrible calamities, the wicked would continue to blaspheme the name of God, and they would go down to the power of an endless death with words of blasphemy still trembling on their lips. On the other hand, as it was in Egypt, so now the people of God would be protected. The earthquake would not in the slightest degree disturb their homes, and the great hail stones would not harm a hair of their heads. They would stand by and see the wonderful works of God. And when these works were finished, they would enter upon the full enjoyment of the blessedness which their God had promised.

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## LECTURE XLIX.

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### THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS.

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.—REV. 17: 1-6.

THE vision of the seven vials, whose outpouring we have been considering, gives a brief but connected history of prominent events from the French revolution to the introduction of the millennium. In our exposi-

tion, we have traced the events shadowed forth by the symbols so far as they have been fulfilled, and we have suggested the events in which the rest of the symbols will probably be fulfilled. The seventh vial was explained as being a summary of what is to be during the period which immediately precedes the millennium, and which is especially to be distinguished by the final and complete victory of the church and the final and complete destruction of the enemies of the church. But the events of this period are so important, so interesting and so encouraging to every one who loves the church, that they are in this and the following chapters described in greater detail. This must be borne in mind or we will fail in understanding the visions before us. Let it then be remembered that in chapters XVII, XVIII and XIX, we have a more extended description of the judgments shadowed forth under the seventh vial, judgments which resulted in the triumph of the church and the overthrow of its foes.

Of course the church has had, and still has, many enemies; but the one most powerful in the days of John and most powerful ever since, is Rome civil and ecclesiastical. This enemy has assumed many different forms and has shown its hatred in many different ways, but it has always been the great foe of true religion. This is the reason why it occupies, under various symbols, such a prominent place in the Apocalypse. These symbols, as well as other passages of Scripture, lead us to expect that when this enemy is destroyed, the great obstacle in the way of the Saviour's kingdom will be removed. We must, therefore, expect that the enemy whose destruction is described in the present chapter is anti-Christian Rome. And the symbols employed, when we come to consider them, will show us that our expectation is well founded.

There is another thing which should excite our attention and arouse our thankfulness as we turn to the chapter upon whose consideration we enter in the present lecture. An angel appears and explains the symbols which make their appearance. And the symbols which the angel explains are not confined to this chapter; they are to be found in other places in the Apocalypse. The explanation of the angel helps us to understand visions whose meaning would otherwise have been beyond our reach. Let us, then, be thankful that God sent his angel to show us things which must be hereafter; and let us with reverence listen to the words of the heavenly expositor of the Apocalyptic visions.

This chapter may be divided into three parts. The first part, which is contained in verses 1-3, is an introduction. An angel appears and announces that the reason of his coming was to show the judgments of the great enemy of the church. In the second part, which is contained in verses 4-6, certain symbols which the apostle saw are vividly described. In the third part, which is contained in verses 7-18, we have the angel's

explanation of the symbols. In this and the following lecture we will consider these divisions in their order.

I. Let us turn our attention to THE ANGEL, and to the purpose of his coming, as announced by himself. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither ; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters : with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness." The angel is described as one of the seven angels which had the seven vials ; which one we are not told, nor is it important for us to know. This angel had poured out his vial, had stood by when the other angels had poured out their vials, and had seen all the symbols which followed. He would, therefore, be interested in these revelations, more interested than one who had taken no part in them. And though of himself he might not be able to understand the meaning of the symbols which he had seen, yet when he was commissioned to explain these symbols to the apostle, God would enable him to understand their meaning. This angel came to the apostle's side, not in all the majesty of his superior and sinless nature ; he came as John's fellow servant. He talked with him as a man might talk with a friend. Coming in this way and talking in this way, the apostle was better able to understand his explanation.

The angel announces the purpose for which he came. It was to show the apostle the judgments which were to come upon the great enemy of the church. This enemy is described under the figure of a harlot, which reminds us of some of the most striking passages in the Old Testament prophecies. In order to give us some idea of the sin of those who forsake the Lord for other gods as it appears in the sight of a pure heaven, it is described as adultery and fornication. This great enemy is further described as sitting upon many waters. Seas and oceans are symbols of peoples and nations. This great enemy is to rule over and be supported by many nations. This enemy is further described as having committed fornication with the kings of the earth. Through its influence, the kings of the nations were seduced from their allegiance to God, and were persuaded to enter into alliance with his foes. This enemy is still further described as making the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. Its influence extended not only to the rulers, but to the people as well. Through the intoxication of its influence, they became, as it were, crazed in their sinful practices.

You will observe that the great enemy of the church is represented under a twofold figure. She is described as a harlot, and as the keeper of a house of entertainment, who gave or sold intoxicating drinks to her guests. In

ancient times, the two were closely associated. In proof, I need only refer to the well known case of Rahab, who entertained the spies during their visit to Jericho. And in modern times, the sins of prostitution and drunkenness are, to a very considerable extent, associated and dependent. According to the angel's announcement, the enemy of the church as a harlot seduced the kings of the earth to commit spiritual fornication; and as the keeper of a house of entertainment, she made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her figurative adultery. Such was the great enemy of the church. On the symbols employed to describe her we need not dwell at greater length in the present connection, for they will claim extended discussion in subsequent parts of this vision.

No sooner had the angel made this announcement of the purpose for which he came, than he carried John away in the spirit into the wilderness. The apostle seemed to be in a desert place. Why the scene of this vision is laid in the wilderness, we are not told, but we will see by and by that the wilderness is an appropriate symbol of the civil power here referred to, at the time referred to. When we compare the third verse with the first verse, there seems to be some confusion in the imagery. There the woman is said to sit upon many waters; here she is represented as being in the wilderness. But there is, in reality, no contradiction. The woman was seen in a barren waste, but it was not a barren waste of dry sand. There were marshes, and stagnant pools, and great lakes; and at the side of these waters, in a desolate wilderness, the woman was sitting. Into this wilderness, made all the more dreary by the marshes, and stagnant pools, and great lakes, the apostle seemed to be carried, and here he saw the wonderful vision which the angel afterwards explained.

II. Let us now turn our attention to this vision. Let us consider THE SYMBOLS, one by one, and get them vividly impressed upon our minds. Let us, without reference to any particular theory of interpretation, discover, if we can, their natural meaning. In this way we will be able to understand and appreciate the angel's subsequent explanations.

1. The first symbol in the vision, the one around which all the other symbols cluster, is a *woman*. She is the same woman of whom the angel had spoken in the first verse, and whom he calls "the great whore." This name, as well as her raiment, the inscription on her forehead, and her conduct as described in the context, shows her to be a woman of depraved character and impure life. Of what would such a woman be a symbol? Hitherto in these Apocalyptic visions but one symbolical female has been introduced to our notice. In chapter XII, we saw a crowned and beautiful woman, with pure and spotless garments. We saw how she was persecuted by Satan and protected by God. It was shown that this woman was the symbol of the true church. If the pure and spotless woman of chapter XII

is the symbol of the true church, we may expect that the abandoned female of the present chapter would be the symbol of a corrupt church. This conclusion is greatly confirmed and strengthened by the use which the Old Testament prophets make of this and similar symbols. When Israel went astray and corrupted herself with idolatry and the immoral practices of the heathen, she is described as playing the harlot. For proof, I refer to the prophecies of Hosea and Ezekiel. Nor is this symbol peculiar to the prophets. It is to be found in the Psalms, and even in the historical books of the Old Testament. In fact the symbol is so common that no reader of the Bible can overlook or misunderstand it. And this figure, better than almost any other the Holy Spirit has seen fit to employ, reveals the relation which exists between God and the church, and the great sin of the church when it forsakes the worship of the true God for the worship of idols. Therefore, the common usage of the Scriptures, as well as the analogy between this vision and the vision of chapter XII, leads us to the conclusion that the abandoned woman, whom the apostle saw in the wilderness, is the symbol of an impure and corrupt church.

2. The next symbol in the vision is *the beast* on which the woman is sitting. "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." This beast is already a familiar symbol to us. He has made his appearance once and again in the visions we have considered. In chapter 12 : 3, we are told, "and there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." Again, in chapter 13 : 1, 2, we are told, "and I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority." There can be no doubt that the great red dragon of chapter XII, and the beast rising out of the sea of chapter XIII, are the same as the scarlet-colored beast upon which the woman was sitting. The similarity of the description, given in each case, forbids any doubt of this point. If we were correct in our explanation of this symbol in previous visions, we cannot be mistaken as to its meaning in the present vision. What was our explanation of the great red dragon and the beast rising out of the sea? It was explained as a symbol of the civil power of Rome, which took its rise before the time of the apostle, and just after the downfall of the Grecian empire, and which has continued through various vicissitudes and forms of administration to the present generation. This power has been exercised by kings, and by consuls, and by emperors, and by popes, and by other rulers of different names, but it has always been, in all its forms and under all its rulers, the great

enemy of the true church. If this is the meaning of the great red dragon and the beast rising out of the sea, this must also be the meaning of the beast on which the woman was sitting. It must be a symbol of the civil power of Rome. Let there be no misunderstanding here. The beast is not a symbol of the ecclesiastical, but of the civil power of Rome. Though these two powers are at times closely connected and intimately interwoven, they are distinct. The beast is a symbol of the civil power whose capital was the city of Rome, and which, under kings, and consuls, and emperors, and finally under popes, ruled the world.

This conclusion, to which the interpretation of previous visions has led us, is confirmed by the description of the beast which is here given. It was a scarlet-colored beast. Scarlet and purple have always been the favorite colors of the Roman power. The military cloaks of the empire were of this color, as witnesses the robe which was thrown in mockery over the Saviour's shoulders at the conclusion of his trial before Pilate. The robes of the emperors and of the high officials of the empire were of this color. In later days, the robes of the popes, and cardinals, and higher clergy were of this color. It is therefore a significant fact that the symbol which shadowed forth this power was a scarlet-colored beast. And this symbolical beast was full of the names of blasphemy; that is, it was all covered over with blasphemous titles and names. It is well known that the rulers of Rome, both the emperors and popes, have called themselves by divine names, have claimed divine attributes, and have received divine worship. It is of them Paul speaks when he says, "he exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Herein is blasphemy.

This symbolical beast had seven heads and ten horns. These symbols have already been explained. The seven heads symbolize the seven hills upon which the capital of the Roman power was builded, and the seven forms of government through which that power was perpetuated. The ten horns symbolize the ten kingdoms into which that power was at one time divided, and by which it was upheld. But as we will have occasion to discuss the meaning of the seven heads and ten horns when we come to consider the angel's explanation, we will not dwell upon it at greater length just now.

This much seems to be plain. The scarlet-colored beast is a symbol of the civil power of Rome. The abandoned woman is the symbol of a corrupt church. As the woman is sitting upon the scarlet-colored beast and guiding its movements, we must expect that the corrupt church is somehow to be supported by the civil power of Rome, and that it is to rule over that power as a man rules the horse upon which he is riding. All this is so plain, that we might, without considering the other symbols and without waiting for the angel's explanation, step to the conclusion that the abandoned woman

is the symbol of the Papal church. But let us not rush to a conclusion before examining the other symbols.

3. The next thing in the vision which claims our attention is *the dress of the woman*. "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-color, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." Her raiment betrays her character. It is the raiment of a harlot. Her robes are expensive and gaudy. She is loaded with jewelry. She has gold, and precious stones, and pearls in profusion. She holds in her hand a golden cup wherewith to entice her lovers. But this cup, instead of being filled with wine, was filled with abominations and filthiness. This symbolical description leads us to expect that the corrupt church symbolized by the abandoned woman, would be a church of extensive ceremonies; it would be a church of gorgeous vestments. Is there any church, the outgrowth of the Roman power, whose high officials are arrayed in purple and scarlet-color? Is there any church distinguished by these colors in all its public festivals and processions? And this corrupt church would be rich. With it gold, and precious stones, and pearls would be in common use. Is there any church whose priests are decked in gold, and precious stones, and pearls? Is there any church whose altars are loaded with precious metals and sparkling gems? Is there any church whose wealth in jewels, and houses, and lands, and money is almost fabulous? This corrupt church would also be a captivating and alluring one. By its pretensions and promises, by its rites and ceremonies, it would allure kings and peoples to be its servants and lovers. Its most powerful allurements would be the abomination and filthiness which it permitted and encouraged. Is there any church which has seduced kings and peoples by its ceremonies, by its easy morality, and its promise of a free pardon for any crime? Is there any church which has been guilty of spiritual adultery in its worship of images and of saints? Is there any church which has permitted licentiousness and immorality of every form among its officers and members to go unrebuked? Perhaps we are ready even now to answer these questions, and to say that all these symbols are fulfilled in the Papal church. But before coming to a conclusion, let us wait till we examine the rest of the vision.

4. The next thing which claims our attention is *the name written on the woman's forehead*. "And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." The name is threefold. In the first place, it is "mystery"; that is, it is mysterious, obscure, hidden. It revealed the character of the woman, not plainly, but under a figure, which could be understood only through study and wisdom. In the next place, the name is "Babylon the great." This is a mysterious name, a name so mysterious that we would not have been

able to understand it without the help of the Spirit. In the third place, the name is, "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth"; that is, the instigator of spiritual adultery and of all manner of uncleanness. The woman's name, as well as her raiment, betrays her character. It is the name of a harlot. This name leads us to expect that the corrupt church symbolized by the abandoned woman would resemble Babylon of old, which was full of wickedness, and which was the great enemy of the ancient church. Is there any church which resembles ancient Babylon in magnificence and wickedness? Is there any church which has always been the foe of true Christianity as Babylon was the foe of Israel? This name would also lead us to expect that this corrupt church would be the author and promoter of spiritual adultery and abomination. Is there any church which has been the promoter of lewdness and adultery? Is there any church which carries upon its forehead through all the centuries of its history the name written in unmistakable characters, "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth"? Perhaps we are ready even now to answer these questions, and to say that these symbols are fulfilled in the Papal church. But before coming to a conclusion, let us examine the other symbol.

5. The last thing which claims our attention in the vision is *the conduct of the woman*. "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration." She was intoxicated. It is indeed a loathsome figure, a figure whose loathsomeness is almost without a parallel in the word of God. A reeling, drunken woman! A drunken man is loathsome enough; but a drunken woman! And a drunken woman who is arrayed in rich apparel, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; and whose drunkenness is only a part of her sin and shame! Is it any wonder we turn away in horror from such a sad and loathsome symbol? But we have not yet reached the full extent of the loathsomeness of the figure. She is drunken, but not with wine; but with blood; and the blood with which she is drunken is the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. To the sins of fornication and drunkenness, she adds the sins of cruelty and murder. Her victims are the holy ones of earth. To show her cruelty and want of feeling, she mingles their blood with the contents of her intoxicating cup. It is no wonder that when John saw her, he wondered with great admiration, or rather, with great astonishment. He was astonished at her appearance, at her apparel, at her name, but especially at her conduct as he saw her reeling under the influence of the intoxicating cup, in which the blood of the martyrs was an ingredient. The woman's conduct, as well as her raiment and her name, betrays her character. It is the conduct of a shameless harlot. This conduct leads us to expect that this corrupt church, symbolized by the abandoned woman,



would be distinguished for her cruelties and murders, that she would especially shed the blood of the saints of God, that she would become so beside herself with cruelty as to seem to be intoxicated, and that she would, in the madness of her intoxication and bloody cruelty, be a wonder to the world. Is there any church which has been notorious for its persecutions, which has poured out the blood of the saints like water on the ground, which has been so intoxicated with bloodshed as to be a wonder in history? Perhaps we are ready even now to answer these questions, and to say that these symbols are fulfilled in the Papal church. But before coming to a certain conclusion, let us wait till we hear the angel's explanation of these symbols, which will be considered in the next lecture. And yet, why need we wait? The natural meaning of these symbols, the laws of symbolic interpretation, parallel symbols in other parts of this book, and the facts of history, all assure us that the shameless harlot is the Papal church.

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## LECTURE L.

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### THE ANGEL'S EXPLANATION.

And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.—REV. 17: 7, 8.

In order to understand and appreciate the angel's explanation, we must keep vividly before our minds the vision of the preceding verses. At the close of the last lecture we ventured the conclusion that all the symbols of this vision were satisfactorily fulfilled in the characteristics and history of the church of Rome. Let us now turn to the explanation of the angel and see if that conclusion was well founded. Certainly the heavenly Father, having commissioned the angel to show the judgment of the great enemy of the church, would enable him to understand the vision. And though the angel's exposition is itself in some places hard to understand, yet it is of great assistance in opening the meaning of some of the darkest visions of this book.

The angel's discourse may be divided into the following parts: 1. The introduction, in which the angel announces his intention to unfold the mystery which the apostle had seen, verse 7; 2. The explanation of the scarlet-

colored beast, verse 8 ; 3. The explanation of the seven heads of the beast, verses 9-11 ; 4. The explanation of the ten horns of the beast, verses 12-14 ; 5. The explanation of the waters upon which the harlot was sitting, verse 15 ; 6. The explanation of the harlot and the prediction of her terrible death, verses 16-18. The first and second parts will be sufficient to occupy our attention in the present lecture.

I. We must notice **THE ANGEL'S INTRODUCTION**. "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel ? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." The apostle wondered with great astonishment at what he saw. He wondered at the woman's dress, at her name and at her conduct. And now the angel wondered at the wonder of the apostle, who stood watching the symbols in speechless amazement. Had the angel forgotten that the apostle was a mere man that he should say, "Wherefore didst thou marvel" ? Or would the angel by this question intimate to the apostle that he need marvel no more ? This seems more probable, for the vision was about to be explained and the mystery solved. Having thus arrested the apostle's attention, he tells him plainly the object of his coming. It was to solve the mystery of the woman and the beast. The woman and the beast were a mystery. Their meaning was hidden and obscure. It required wisdom to understand it. And the angel had wisdom, both natural and expressly communicated to him for this mission upon which he came. We may therefore be confident that the angel was competent to explain this mystery, and that if we are unable to understand his explanation, the fault must be, not in the angel or in his explanation, but in ourselves.

II. We have **THE ANGEL'S EXPLANATION OF THE BEAST**. "The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not ; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition ; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Remember that the beast is a symbol. Remember also that the beast is a symbol of a civil power. This is evident from previous visions, in which the same symbol has occupied a prominent place. It is also evident from the angel's subsequent explanation of the heads and horns. The question, then, with which we now have to do is this, of what civil power is the beast a symbol ? This is the question which the angel answers. It is true he does not answer it by giving us the name of the civil power. He describes its origin, its history and its destiny. If I mistake not, we will find that his description is applicable to but one of all the civil powers which have flourished on the earth. One other remark before we enter

upon the consideration of the angel's explanation : our version of the last clause of this verse is a little faulty. According to the standard manuscripts, to which we have had occasion so often to appeal, the concluding words of the verse should read, "when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and shall again be present." The variation is not great, but the amended reading expresses more clearly than the received text the idea which was intended to be conveyed.

These words remind us of the similar words used by the Saviour with reference to himself in his valedictory discourse. He said, "A little while and ye shall see me ; and again a little while and ye shall not see me ; because I go to the Father." These words puzzled the sorrowing disciples, but the Saviour explained them so plainly that there can be no doubt as to their meaning. He was speaking of his death and resurrection. He was then with his disciples ; in a little while he would die and be buried. and then they would not see him ; in another little while he would rise from the dead and go in and out as before, and then they would see him. In other words he was, and he would not be, and he would be present with them again. If we explain the similar language of the angel in a similar way, it teaches us that the civil power symbolized by the beast was for a time, that is, for a time it existed and prospered ; that after a time of life and prosperity, it was not, that is, it became practically extinct, it disappeared from human view as the Saviour did during the three days of his burial ; that after a time of apparent death, it came forth from the abyss of its figurative grave, and that after its restoration to life and power it was again present in all its former vigor and prosperity ; that after its second period of vigor and prosperity, it would be finally and completely destroyed ; and that all the inhabitants of the earth, save the saints to whom the purposes of the Lord had been revealed, would wonder when they saw the prosperity, the apparent extinction, the resurrection, the new prosperity and the final destruction of this civil power. All this seems to be plain. No civil power will meet the requirements of the angel's explanation, which does not have these characteristics and pass through these vicissitudes. It must first be prosperous ; then it must apparently die ; then it must be raised from its apparent death ; then it must enter upon a new career of prosperity ; at last it must be totally destroyed ; and in all these changes it must be the wonder of the world. And no civil power will meet the requirements of the angel's explanation, which does not maintain its identity through all these changes. From the beginning to the end, it must be the same power under all its vicissitudes and forms of administration. Is there such a power ?

There are two ways in which this question might be answered. In the first place, we might sketch the history of all the nations of the earth, and then see in which one all the characteristics necessary to the fulfillment of

the symbol are to be found. But this would require more time, research and ability than I am able to command. In the second place, we might take up the history of that particular nation, in which the previous visions lead us to believe that the symbols are fulfilled; and if we find that the symbols are exactly fulfilled in the history of that nation, we may conclude, without going further, that this is the nation shadowed forth by the scarlet-colored beast. This is the plan which, on account of its brevity, we will follow in the present lecture.

It has been said that the previous visions and their interpretation lead us to believe that the scarlet-colored beast shadows forth the civil power of Rome. The question then before us for our immediate consideration is, Does the angel's explanation satisfactorily describe the Roman power? Was that power for a long time prosperous? Did it then apparently die? Was it after a season raised from its apparent death? Did it then enter upon a new career of prosperity? Was it through all these vicissitudes the wonder of the world? And did it through all these changes maintain its identity? That the Roman power was for a long time prosperous requires no extended proof. Historians describe in glowing terms its rise and progress. From a lowly origin it grew and spread till it filled the earth. Captives of every land performed its work. The wealth of every land flowed into its treasuries. The fruits of every land were found upon its tables. Men of every race and complexion jostled in the streets of its capital. Its standards floated in every breeze, and its armies were known and feared in every clime. For centuries Rome was the mistress of the world. Its history during these centuries was the history of the world. This era of prosperity continued from the time of the kings to the time of the emperors who sat upon the throne when John was an exile in Patmos, and for many centuries afterwards. All this is so well known that a single extract from history need not be read to prove it.

Was this long period of prosperity followed by a period of adversity so great that the Roman power seemed to be entirely extinct? Every student of history is ready to answer this question in the affirmative. After hundreds of years of prosperity the Roman empire entered upon its decline. Through the enervation of wealth, luxury and dissipation, it became too weak to resist its enemies—too weak to bear up under its own weight. The sturdy barbarians of the north came rolling over the fertile plains of the south like the billows of the sea. Province after province, city after city fell before them, until Rome became but a name and memory of the past, and its rich possessions became a howling wilderness. In proof of these assertions, I refer to Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the historian whose words have thrown light upon so many of the previous visions of the Apocalypse. His account of the condition of the Roman empire at the beginning of the sixth century seems to be descrip-

tive of that wilderness in which the woman was seated beside the waters, and an explanation of the statement that the beast was not: "Rome had reached, about the close of the sixth century, the lowest period of its depression. By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were exhausted. The lofty tree, under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. The ministers of command and the messengers of victory no longer met on the Appian or Flaminian way; and the hostile approach of the Lombards was often felt and continually feared. The inhabitants of a potent and peaceful capital, who visit without an anxious thought the gardens of an adjacent country, will faintly picture in their fancy the distress of the Romans. They shut or opened their gates with a trembling hand, beheld from their walls the flames of their burning houses, and heard the lamentations of their brethren, who were coupled together like dogs, and dragged away into distant slavery beyond the sea and the mountains. Such incessant alarms must annihilate the pleasures and interrupt the labors of a rural life; and the Campagna of Rome was speedily reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness, in which the land is barren, the waters are impure, and the air is infectious. Curiosity and ambition no longer attracted the nations to the capital of the world; but if chance or necessity directed the steps of a wandering stranger, he contemplated with horror the vacancy of the city, and might be tempted to ask, Where is the senate and where are the people? In a season of excessive rains the Tiber swelled above its banks and rushed with irresistible violence into the valleys of the seven hills. A pestilential disease arose from the stagnation of the deluge, and so rapid was the contagion that fourscore persons expired in an hour in the midst of a solemn procession which implored the mercy of heaven. A society in which marriage is encouraged and industry prevails soon repairs the accidental losses of pestilence and war; but as the far greater part of the Romans was condemned to hopeless indigence and celibacy, the depopulation was constant and visible, and the gloomy enthusiasts might expect the approaching failure of the human race. Yet the number of citizens still exceeded the measure of subsistence; their precarious food was supplied from the harvests of Sicily or Egypt; and the frequent repetition of famine betrays the inattention of the emperor to a distant province. The edifices of Rome were exposed to the same ruin and decay; the mouldering fabrics were easily overthrown by inundations, tempests and earthquakes; and the monks who had occupied the most advantageous stations exulted in their base triumph over the ruins of antiquity." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 4, p. 416.

Was this period of adversity and apparent death followed by an apparent resurrection? This question must also be answered in the affirmative. Out

of the ruins of the old empire a new one arose ; and this new empire fairly eclipsed the old one in its extent, its power, its magnificence, and its wickedness. This new empire was ruled by the popes of Rome. It was founded by Gregory, the first and greatest of the popes. For proof of this figurative resurrection of the Roman power, I refer again to the historian Gibbon : " Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honor and dominion. A vague tradition was embraced that two Jewish teachers, a tent maker and a fisherman, had formerly been executed in the circus of Nero, and at the end of five hundred years their genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the palladium of Christian Rome. The pilgrims of the east and west resorted to the holy threshold ; but the shrines of the apostles were guarded by miracles and invisible terrors ; and it was not without fear that the pious Catholic approached the object of his worship. It was fatal to touch, it was dangerous to behold, the bodies of the saints ; and those who from the purest motives presumed to disturb the repose of the sanctuary, were affrighted by visions, or punished with sudden death. The unreasonable request of an empress, who wished to deprive the Romans of their sacred treasure, the head of St. Paul, was rejected with the deepest abhorrence ; and the popes asserted, most probably with truth, that a linen cloth which had been sanctified in the neighborhood of his body, or the filings of his nails, which it was sometimes easy and sometimes impossible to obtain, possessed an equal degree of miraculous virtue. But the power as well as the virtue of the apostles resided with living energy in the breast of their successors ; and the chair of St. Peter was filled under the reign of Maurice by the first and greatest of the name of Gregory. \* \* \* Gregory might justly be styled the father of his country. \* \* \* The sword of the enemy was suspended over Rome ; it was averted by the mild eloquence and seasonable gifts of the pontiff, who commanded the respect of heretics and barbarians." Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. 4, p. 418.

And Gibbon is not the only historian who describes this figurative resurrection. I quote two other brief extracts from writers of the middle ages : " The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the pontificate, Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable and been a most foul habitation thenceforward of cattle. But in the pontificate it revived as in a second birth ; its empire in magnitude not indeed equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar ; because all nations, from east and from west, venerate the pope, not otherwise than they before obeyed the emperors." " The princes of the world now adore and worship as perpetual dictator, the successor, not of Cæsar, but of the fisherman Peter ; that is, the supreme pontiff, the substitute of the aforesaid emperor." See Barnes' *Notes*, p. 421.

In these extracts the following points are made plain : the Roman empire was brought very low ; it seemed to tremble on the very edge of utter and final dissolution ; it was unexpectedly and strangely revived. Its dissolution seemed so complete that it might have been described as having gone down into the abyss of the grave, or Hades, for this is the exact meaning of the word translated "bottomless pit." Its revival seemed so strange that it might be described as ascending out of the grave, or the abyss, or Hades. Surely in all this the explanation of the angel is strikingly fulfilled in the history of the Roman empire.

Was this apparent resurrection followed by a new career of prosperity ? This question must also be answered in the affirmative. After the sixth century, Rome became even greater than it had been before. Mighty as were the emperors, the popes were mightier still. The kings and nations of the earth revered Augustus, but they paid a more profound reverence to Gregory and his successors. The old empire exerted a great influence over the affairs of the world, but the civil power of the Papacy exerted a still greater influence. These assertions require no proof. The whole civil history of the church of Rome, from the days of Gregory to the present generation, shows that the Roman power under its new form was even more powerful than under its old form. Surely in all this the explanation of the angel is strikingly fulfilled.

Was this power under all its vicissitudes the wonder of all the inhabitants of the world except the saints ? This question must also be answered in the affirmative. You will observe how the saints are here described. They are those "whose names are written in the book of life from the foundation of the world." Here, as elsewhere in the Scripture, the church of Christ is compared to a kingdom. The names of all the subjects of this kingdom are enrolled. The book in which they are enrolled is called the book of life, for those whose names are written therein are delivered from the power of an endless death, and are heirs for ever and ever of life everlasting. Those whose names are written therein have received this honor not because of any merit or righteousness of their own. Their names were written in the book of life before they had any merit or righteousness, before they were born, from the foundation of the world. Mysterious as this doctrine is, here it stands in unmistakable words on the pages of inspiration, and it becomes us to believe it, though we are not able to understand it. And the saints are better acquainted with the plans and doings of the Lord than other men are. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." By a study of the Scriptures, by communion with God, and by the enlightenment of the Spirit, they are so well informed that they are not astonished at the prosperity of the wicked and at the sorrows of the righteous. Therefore, knowing, at least in part, what God intended to accomplish by the great Roman empire, they did not wonder at its prosperity, its death, its

resurrection, and its new life. All the rest of the inhabitants of the world did wonder. The career of the Roman power has indeed been wonderful. Even the saints, with all their superior knowledge of the divine government, could not restrain their wonder. And those, whose unbelief compelled them to assign everything to natural causes alone, were astonished beyond measure, for they could not account for the prosperity, the apparent death, the resurrection, and the new life of the Roman empire. I state a fact which is well known, when I say that the Roman empire has always been a wonder to the world.

Once more: did the Roman empire remain the same during all these changes?—or rather, did it preserve its identity? This question must also be answered in the affirmative. Its capital was always the same. Its laws and forms of government were substantially the same. Its great design and ambition to rule the world was always the same. Under kings, emperors and popes, it has always been the same; and therefore it is appropriately symbolized by the one beast which was, and is, and shall again be present.

But one thing remains to be noticed in the angel's explanation, viz., the destiny of the beast. It goeth to perdition. The word rendered "perdition," properly means destruction. This is its meaning here. The power symbolized by this beast will be destroyed. The angel assures the apostle of this for his encouragement. The apostle might have thought that this power, so marvelously restored to new life after its apparent death, would exist for ever as the great foe of the church, but the angel assures him that he need not fear. The same divine hand which brought that power up from the abyss would, when it had accomplished its mission, consign it to destruction.

This is the angel's explanation of the scarlet-colored beast, which harmonizes perfectly with the theory we have adopted in the interpretation of previous visions, and which finds its exact fulfillment in the rise, progress and history of the civil power of Rome. We may therefore conclude that the scarlet-colored beast of this vision, as well as the great red dragon and the beast which rose out of the sea, was intended by the Holy Spirit to be a symbol of the civil power of Rome. That power was for a long time prosperous; then it declined to apparent death; then it was strangely revived as if it was brought up from the abyss; then it entered upon a new career of prosperity, to the wonder of all the inhabitants of the earth, save those who through divine grace were partakers of the secret of the Lord. Read again the angel's explanation, and tell me how the history of the civil power of Rome could be described in fewer and plainer words. If the remaining part of the angel's explanation points in the same direction, we will be confirmed in the conclusion that the scarlet-colored beast is the divinely appointed symbol of the civil power of Rome.



## LECTURE LI.

## THE ANGEL'S EXPLANATION—CONTINUED.

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.—REV. 17: 9-11.

THE vision which the apostle had seen must still be kept before our minds. He had seen a gaudily-attired, impure and drunken woman, sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, having seven heads and ten horns. In the last lecture we considered the angel's explanation of the scarlet-colored beast; and we concluded that the beast was the divinely appointed symbol of the civil power of Rome.

III. We are now to consider the third part of the angel's discourse, viz., his explanation of THE SEVEN HEADS OF THE BEAST. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." The angel's explanation of the seven heads is introduced with the obscure remark, "here is the mind that hath wisdom." I say "obscure," for though the general meaning of the remark is obvious enough, its exact meaning and its particular application are not easy to reach. However, this much seems plain. The symbol can be understood and explained; but in order to understand and explain it, there must be wisdom. The mind which shows itself able to understand and explain it has true wisdom, the wisdom which cometh down from above. This is manifestly true, for even the angel's explanation does not make the symbol so plain that there is no danger of falling into error in its interpretation. If we wish to understand the meaning of the vision, we must first seek the wisdom which comes from the illumination of the Spirit, and then through a diligent use of that wisdom, and the faculties and opportunities which divine grace has bestowed upon us, we may reach that knowledge which only the mind that has wisdom may hope to reach.

According to the angel's explanation, the seven heads of the beast have a twofold meaning. In the first place, they are symbols of seven mountains. "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." This part of the angel's explanation is of great clearness and importance. It describes and fixes the locality of the civil power symbolized by the beast

in such a way as precludes the possibility of mistake. There is a city builded upon seven hills which has long been known as the seven-hilled city. This name is well known to every student of history; and every school boy knows that it describes Rome, the capital of the civil power symbolized by the beast. The fact that Rome was builded on seven hills requires no proof. If proof was necessary, I might quote extract after extract from the pages of history, in which the fact is distinctly stated. From the city of Rome, the civil power of Rome has ruled the world. From this seven-hilled city issued the decrees which moulded the destiny of the nations of the earth. From this seven-hilled city marched the armies which carried the victorious standards of the empire through all the lands. From this seven-hilled city went forth the laws and the influences which are yet felt to the remotest parts of civilization. From this seven-hilled city thundered the Papal bulls which made the mightiest kings and kingdoms of Christendom to tremble. No city, except the city of Jerusalem, has exerted such a prominent and extended influence as the city of the seven hills.

The angel tells us that the seven heads of the beast are the symbol of this city. The capital of a nation, as the etymology of the word indicates, is the head of the nation. There is therefore a peculiar propriety that the beast which symbolized the civil power of Rome should have seven heads, for the capital of that power was builded on seven mountains. And the angel's explanation is made all the more plain, when we consider the relation between the woman and the seven hills. They are "the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." The woman is, as we have seen, the symbol of an impure and corrupt church. We have already ventured the conclusion, that the corrupt church symbolized is no other than the church of Rome, a conclusion which will be abundantly confirmed hereafter. And it is a matter of history, that the seat of the church of Rome was the city of Rome. It is therefore evident that the angel's explanation, on this interpretation of it, corresponds exactly with well known facts. The seven-hilled city was the head, the capital of the Roman power; it was the seat of the Papal church, the centre and source of its influence. When the angel says, "the seven heads are the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth," he could not have described the city of Rome more plainly, unless he had spoken in the ears of the apostle the very name of Rome.

The seven heads of the beast symbolize not only the seven-hilled city which was the capital of the Roman empire, but also the sevenfold government of that empire. "And they are seven kings." The word translated "kings" may denote those who are literally kings, those who exercise royal or supreme authority. It may denote those who exercise subordinate authority, as deputies, princes or leaders. Thus in the New Testament, Herod is called a king, and yet he was under the authority of the Roman

emperor. It may denote dynasties, or forms of government, or modes of administration. In this sense the word is evidently used in Dan. 7 : 24. "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." We have always to determine from the context and from parallel passages of Scripture the sense in which the word is used in any particular connection. What does it mean in the verse under consideration? Does it mean kings, properly so called, or subordinate rulers, or dynasties? There is nothing in the text or context which clearly answers these questions. The language of the angel in itself considered, will apply equally well to kings or to dynasties. But the parallel in the book of Daniel, just referred to, leads us to believe that the word kings here as well as there refers to dynasties and not to individual rulers. This inference is strengthened by the conclusions which we have already reached. If the civil power of Rome is symbolized by the beast, then the seven heads of the beast could not symbolize seven individual rulers; for the number of individual rulers in the Roman kingdom has been far more than seven. Therefore it is probable that in the present instance it refers to dynasties, or to forms of government. Let us, then, turn to the pages of Roman history and see what forms of administration there have been. In Roman history we find six forms of government distinctly specified, viz., by kings, by consuls, by dictators, by decemvirs, by tribunes, and by emperors. To show that this is no arbitrary or fanciful arrangement, made to meet a theory of interpretation which has been adopted, I quote two extracts from well known historians of Rome. The first is from Livy. Speaking of what is contained in the previous parts of his history, he says, "in five books, I have related what was done at Rome, pertaining both to foreign wars and domestic strifes, from the foundation of the city to the time when it was taken, as it was governed by kings, by consuls, by dictators, by decemvirs, and by consular tribunes." Book 6, chapter 1. Here he mentions five forms of government which had existed in Rome. He does not mention the sixth, viz., the government by emperors, for this form did not exist during the time covered by the five books of his history to which he refers. The second extract is from Tacitus, who was almost a contemporary with the apostle John. "In the beginning, Rome was governed by kings. Then L. Brutus gave her liberty and the consulship. A temporary power was conferred on the dictators. The authority of the decemvirs did not continue beyond the space of two years, neither was the power of the military tribunes of long duration. The rule of Cinna and Sylla was brief, and the power of Pompey and Crassus passed into the hands of Cæsar, and the arms of Lepidus and Antony were surrendered to Augustus, who united all things, broken by civil discord, under the name of prince in the imperial government." Book 1, chapter 1. Here the historian distinctly mentions

six forms of government. If it was necessary I might quote from other historians to show this sixfold form of government which had existed in Rome. But it is not necessary. It is sufficiently plain that the Roman kingdom had been ruled by kings, then by consuls, then by dictators, then by decemvirs, then by tribunes, and then by emperors.

But was there a seventh form of government, following the government by emperors? To this question history returns no doubtful answer. After the breaking up of the imperial power and the division of the empire, Rome became, about the middle of the sixth century, a dukedom under the exarchate of Ravenna. To prove that Rome was then reduced to a dukedom, and that the duchy of Rome was the direct successor of the great Roman empire of the past, I quote again from Gibbon's history. "During a period of two hundred years, Italy was unequally divided between the kingdom of the Lombards and the exarchate of Ravenna. The offices and professions, which the jealousy of Constantine had separated, were united by the indulgence of Justinian; and eighteen successive exarchs were invested, in the decline of the empire, with the full remains of civil, of military, and even of ecclesiastical power. Their immediate jurisdiction, which was afterwards consecrated as the patrimony of St. Peter, extended over the modern Romagna, the marshes or valleys of Ferrara and Comacchio, five maritime cities from Rimini to Ancona, and a second inland Pentapolis, between the Adriatic coast and the hills of the Apennines. Three subordinate provinces, of Rome, of Venice, and of Naples, which were divided by hostile lands from the palace of Ravenna, acknowledged, both in peace and in war, the supremacy of the exarch. The duchy of Rome appears to have included the Tuscan, the Sabine, and the Latin conquests, of the first four hundred years of the city, and the limits may be distinctly traced along the coast from Civita Vecchia to Terracina, and with the course of the Tiber from Ameria and Narni to the port of Ostia." Gibbon's Rome, vol. 4, p. 408. From these extracts, it appears that the seventh form of government was a dukedom.

It is therefore evident that the angel's explanation, on this interpretation of it, corresponds exactly with well known historical facts. There were seven modes of administering the civil power of Rome. Kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, tribunes, emperors and dukes had one after another held the scepter. There was to be an eighth form of administration, as we will see when we come to consider verse 11, viz., that of the popes; but the verse now under consideration refers only to seven.

The angel tells us something more about these seven forms of administration, and this *something more* will help us to test the correctness of the conclusion at which we have arrived. He tells us "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come." If we were correct in our interpretation of the word "kings," then this declaration of the angel teaches us

that five of the above mentioned forms of government had passed away at the time he was speaking to the apostle, that the sixth was then in existence, and that the seventh was still future. We know when it was that John was an exile in Patmos and saw these visions. It was near the close of the first century of the Christian era. When we turn to the pages of history, we find that, at the beginning of the Christian era, the first five forms of government under which the Roman power had flourished had passed away; that the sixth form of government, that of the emperors, was in existence; and that the seventh form of government, that of the dukes, had not yet begun. Therefore, it is evident that this part of the angel's explanation corresponds exactly with well known historical facts. Kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs and tribunes had all disappeared from the stage; the emperors were then sitting on the throne; and the dukedom had not yet been thought of. Of the seven forms of government under which the Roman power was to be perpetuated, five had fallen, one was, and one had not yet come.

The angel tells us that this seventh form of government would be of comparatively short duration. "When he cometh he must continue for a short space." This seventh form of government was, as has been stated, a dukedom. Was the dukedom of Rome under the exarchate of Ravenna of short duration? According to Gibbon, in that extract which was quoted a little while ago, it continued "for a period of two hundred years." This was a short space when compared with the centuries through which the previous forms of government had stretched. And, according to the same extract, this dukedom under the exarchate of Ravenna was a prolongation of the old Roman authority. "Eighteen successive exarchs were invested, in the decline of the empire, with the full remains of civil, of military, and even of ecclesiastical power." It is therefore evident that this part of the angel's explanation corresponds exactly with well known facts of history. The seventh form of government, when it came, would continue only for a short space.

The angel tells us still further that there was to be an eighth head, growing up after the seventh and out of the seventh, and that this head is a symbol of the same power which is symbolized by the beast. "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." That is, after the seven forms of government which have been mentioned, there was to be another, differing from all which had preceded it, and the prolongation of them. This form of government was to be entirely distinct from all the others; and when viewed in this light it could be called the eighth. But when viewed in another light, it would be the same as that symbolized by the beast itself. It would be the last form of the civil power of Rome. Now let us turn to history, and see whether there is anything there which corresponds with the angel's expla-

nation: After the period of two hundred years, during which Rome was a dukedom under the exarchate of Ravenna, what was the next form of government? This question is sufficiently answered in the quotations which were made in the last lecture, and which need not now be repeated. About the beginning of the seventh century, Gregory the Great, whom Gibbon calls the father and saviour of his country, established a new mode of administration, that of the popes. This mode of administration differed from any that had preceded it; and therefore it might be called the eighth form of government. But under this new form, Rome had all the power which it ever had, and was guilty of all the wickedness of which it ever had been guilty. It was Rome still. And as it was Rome still, it may be regarded not merely as the eighth form of government, but also as the great civil power which was symbolized by the beast. In other words, in one aspect of it, it was an eighth head; in another aspect of it, it was the scarlet-colored beast itself.

We need not now dwell on the explanation of the beast which the angel here gives, for it has already been considered in our discussion of verse 8. "The beast that was, and is not, and goeth into perdition." But I would call attention to one point of resemblance between this and the previous visions: In chapter 13:3, it is said, "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed." This language shadows forth the fact that the power symbolized by the beast was through great adversity brought near to destruction, and that it was unexpectedly and marvelously restored to its former prosperity. And though, in this vision, we are not told which head was wounded, it is reasonable to suppose that it was the seventh head. We have, then, in this vision, an accurate description of the long prosperity of the Roman kingdom, of its decline until it became but the dukedom of Rome, when it seemed to be wounded to death; and of its remarkable revival under the popes, when its deadly wound seemed to be healed. In verse 8 of this chapter, we have the same facts shadowed forth under different symbols. "The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." That is, the beast symbolized a civil power which was prosperous for a time, and then became practically extinct, and then ascended from its abyss of figurative death, and then entered upon a new era of prosperity, and was finally destroyed. In this language, we have an accurate description of the long prosperity of the Roman kingdom, of its decline, of its revival under the popes, and of its final destruction. In the verses before us, we have the same facts shadowed forth under still different symbols. After the seven heads had lived and flourished, another head appeared, which in one sense would be the eighth head, and in another sense would be the beast itself. We have, then, in this language an accurate description of the long prosperity of the Roman kingdom, of

its decline, of its revival under the popes, and of its final destruction. This marvelous resemblance between these three passages and well known facts in history, must have great influence in convincing us that our theory of interpretation is correct.

This is the angel's explanation of the seven heads of the scarlet-colored beast. They have a twofold meaning. In the first place, they symbolize the seven hills on which Rome, the capital of the civil power of Rome was builded, and from which she ruled the world. In the second place, they symbolize the seven forms of government under which the civil power of Rome was perpetuated. Of these forms of government, five, viz., that of kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs and tribunes, had passed away at the time of the apostle; one, that of the emperors, was then in existence; one, that of the dukes, was to arise afterwards, and was to continue for a short space; and finally, there was to be an eighth, that of the popes, which would be the last, and would go to destruction. We cannot withhold our amazement at the wonderful correspondence between the angel's explanation and the facts of history.

## LECTURE LII.

### THE ANGEL'S EXPLANATION—CONTINUED.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.—REV. 17: 12-18.

In the present lecture, we continue and conclude our examination of the angel's explanation of the vision of the woman and the scarlet-colored beast.

IV. We come to the fourth part of the angel's discourse, viz., his explanation of THE TEN HORNS of the scarlet-colored beast. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom

as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." According to this explanation, the ten horns are ten kings. This is so plain that it may not be questioned. But of what kings are the ten horns the symbols? In order to answer this question, we must first determine what is meant by the word "kings." In the last lecture, it was stated that this word might denote either kings, properly so called, or subordinate rulers, or dynasties, and that we have to decide from the context and from parallel passages of Scripture what is the meaning of the term in any particular connection. In verse 10 we discovered that it meant dynasties or forms of government. A little reflection will convince us that this cannot be its meaning here. It seems evident that these ten kings, whatever they were, existed at the same time, and not one after another; that is, they were contemporaneous, and not consecutive. They received their power at the same time and held it during the same brief hour; they were united in their support of the beast and in their hostility to the Lamb. This language does not describe dynasties. We therefore conclude that the word "kings" in this connection denotes individual rulers. If we find that this conclusion is sustained by the facts of history, we may be sure that it is correct. It may, perhaps, avoid confusion to say just here, that the words *kings* and *kingdoms* will be used interchangeably. Where there are kings there must be kingdoms. If the horns of the beast are symbols of ten kings, they must also be symbols of ten kingdoms.

The angel tells us that the ten kings symbolized by the ten horns had "received no kingdom as yet"; that is, they had not come into power when the apostle was in Patmos. We must look for the fulfillment of this part of the angel's explanation at a time subsequent to the first century of the Christian era. Was the Roman empire, after the imperial power of the emperors had declined, divided into ten kingdoms? This is a simple question, and there should be no difficulty in finding an answer in history. If this question can be answered in the affirmative, then we have additional evidence that our theory of interpretation is correct; but if this question must be answered in the negative, then our theory of interpretation is incorrect and must be abandoned. Let us, then, turn to Roman history and see what was the condition of the Roman empire during the centuries which followed these Apocalyptic visions.

When John saw these wonderful visions, the emperors were firmly seated upon the throne of the Roman empire, and their authority was acknowledged in nearly all the civilized world. But as time passed away, that empire began to show signs of approaching dissolution. Through the



enervation of riches, luxury and dissipation, it became so weak that it could not resist its enemies, it could not even bear up under its own weight. The sturdy barbarians of the north swept over the fertile plains of the south like the billows of the sea. City after city was taken, province after province rebelled against the central power, until the great empire was broken into fragments. The city of Rome, which had been the capital of the world, became the capital of a petty dukedom under the exarchate of Ravenna; and the other parts of the empire had their own capitals and their own kings. All this is well known. But were the kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided ten in number? This is the question with which we have now to do, and it is a question of vital importance to our theory of interpretation. Sir Isaac Newton finds the following kingdoms in the territory which was once occupied by the Roman empire: "1. The kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in Spain and Africa; 2. The kingdom of the Suevians in Spain; 3. The kingdom of the Visigoths; 4. The kingdom of the Alans in Gallia; 5. The kingdom of the Burgundians; 6. The kingdom of the Franks; 7. The kingdom of the Britons; 8. The kingdom of the Huns; 9. The kingdom of the Lombards; 10. The kingdom of Ravenna." Machiavelli, in his *History of Florence*, mentions the following: "1. The Ostrogoths in Moesia; 2. The Visigoths in Pannonia; 3. The Sueves and Alans in Gascoigne and Spain; 4. The Vandals in Africa; 5. The Franks in France; 6. The Burgundians in Burgundy; 7. The Heruli and Turingi in Italy; 8. The Saxons and Angles in Britain; 9. The Huns in Hungary; 10. The Lombards at first upon the Danube, afterwards in Italy." Lyman, in his *Chart of History*, mentions the following: "The Vandals, Alans, Suevi, Heruli, Franks, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Burgundians, Lombards and Britons."

Though these authors, and others which might be quoted, differ somewhat in their arrangement, yet they substantially agree. If, then, the testimony of history is to be relied on, the Roman empire was divided into ten kingdoms subsequent to the time of the apostle's exile. Therefore, it is evident that this part of the angel's explanation exactly corresponds with established historical facts. The Roman empire, symbolized by the beast, was divided into ten kingdoms, symbolized by the ten horns of the beast; or, in the language of the angel, "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no power as yet."

The angel tells us still further, that the ten kings "received their power as kings one hour with the beast." It is not said from what source they would receive their power, but of course their authority would be conferred upon them from God, for "he puts down one, and sets another up." But their authority was to be of short duration. It was to be for one hour. In the prophetic visions of this book, a day stands for a literal year,

and the fractional part of a day for the corresponding part of a literal year. Is the word in this connection used in its prophetic sense? We think not. The verse under consideration is not a vision; it is the angel's explanation of the vision. Hence the word "hour," like the other terms which the angel employs, would be used not in its prophetic but in its ordinary sense. If it is used in its ordinary sense, then it must mean that the authority of the ten kings was to be of short duration. These kings were also to receive and exercise their authority with the beast; that is, they were to arise at the same time the Papal power arose, they were to live side by side with it, and they were to be under its influence. Are these characteristics to be found in the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided, and which we have supposed to be symbolized by the ten horns? Were these kingdoms of short duration? Every reader of history knows that they were. They were temporary in their character. They soon passed into the more permanent forms of government which succeeded them. They exercised their power only for a brief hour, and then the continent of Europe crystalized into those permanent governments which, with certain variations, have remained till the present. These ten kingdoms took their rise at the time the Papal power arose, that is, about the beginning of the seventh century; during their short existence they lived side by side with the Papal power, and they were, to a greater or less extent, moulded by its influence. To prove these assertions would require more extracts from history than I have space to quote. Besides this, such proof is hardly necessary. Our knowledge of general history is probably sufficient to convince us that the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided were of short duration, and that they received and exercised their authority with the power symbolized by the beast. Therefore, it is evident that this part of the angel's explanation corresponds with well known historical facts. "The ten kings were to receive power as kings one hour with the beast."

The angel tells us still further, that the kings symbolized by the ten horns "have one mind, and they shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Though in some respects they would be wholly independent of each other, in other respects they would be one. Though they would maintain a separate existence, they would be of the same mind. The particular thing in which they would be of the same mind was in the support of the Papacy, the power symbolized by the beast. They would be supporters of the Papal power; they would give all the weight of their moral influence and material strength to uphold it. Though they might be at war among themselves, yet in every question which had reference to the Papal power, they would be one. The question, then, presents itself, and it is a question easily answered, were the ten kingdoms into which the empire was divided separate and independent, and yet united in the sup-

port of the Papacy? It is unnecessary to dwell at length on the answer to this question. These ten nations were of different origin, they often engaged in war with each other, each had its own king, its own government, and its own capital; and yet they were all subject to the Papacy, and they continued so during their separate existence, and when they were merged into other powers, until the Reformation of the sixteenth century. All these are well known facts in history. It is therefore evident that this part of the angel's explanation corresponds with historical facts. The ten kingdoms, though separate and independent of each other, were united in their support of the Papacy; or, in the figurative language of the angel, they "have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."

The angel tells us still further, that the kings symbolized by the ten horns "shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords and King of kings"; that is, they would be united not only in their support of the Papacy, but also in their hostility to the Lamb and his followers. The Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ. Of this there can be no doubt. In the sacrifices of the old dispensation, he was shadowed forth under this figure. The Baptist pointed him out to his disciples as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." In this book, he is revealed as "the Lamb in the midst of the throne," and as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." But notice how this Lamb is here described. "He is Lord of lords and King of kings." He is the Supreme Ruler over the earth and over the mightiest kings of earth. Surely, then, he is no mere creature, as some would have us believe. He who is King of kings and Lord of lords must be the Supreme King and Lord, God over all, blessed for ever. And because the Lamb is King of kings and Lord of lords, we can easily see that any hostility against him is hopeless. The Lamb shall overcome them that combine against him. The nations of the earth who see the hopelessness of making war with him will be safe; but those who are given up to blindness of heart rush upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler.

Notice also the angel's description of the followers of the Lamb. They that are with him are "called," called out of the world, called by divine grace, called through the everlasting gospel, called to be saints. They are "chosen," chosen from the sons of Adam's fallen race, chosen not because they are worthy, but through the sovereign mercy of God, chosen to be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. They are also "faithful," faithful in spite of their many temptations, faithful through all their bloody persecutions, faithful unto death. Those who are thus called, chosen, and faithful, follow the Lamb in this life, and they will follow him whithersoever he goeth in the life to come. They are partakers of his sufferings here, and they shall be partakers of his glory hereafter.

Against the Lamb and his followers, the nations symbolized by the ten horns were to make war, and though for a time they would prevail, in the end the Lamb would gain the victory. Did the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided make war with the Lamb and his followers? Of course it is not meant that they openly and avowedly made war against the Son of God, but that they did this practically. As Christ and his followers are one, those who persecute the church persecute the Lamb. Did these nations persecute the church? It is unnecessary to show from history that they not only sustained the Papacy in its persecutions, but also engaged actively in persecutions themselves, for all this is well known. Nor is it necessary to show from the signs of the times, from the records of the past, and from the word of God, that they will not be able to extinguish the true religion, and that notwithstanding all their persecutions the church and the Lamb will ultimately be victorious. Therefore, it is evident that this part of the angel's explanation corresponds with well known historical facts. The ten kingdoms have made war with the Lamb, and the Lamb is overcoming them.

The angel's explanation of the ten horns of the beast is accurately fulfilled in the facts of history. They symbolize the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided, which were of short duration, and which were united in their support of the Papacy, and in their hostility towards Christ and his church.

V. We come now to the angel's explanation of THE WATERS ON WHICH THE WOMAN WAS SITTING. "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The reference is to that part of the symbol which is described in verse 1. "Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." The sea is a well known symbol of a great multitude of people. This symbol is to be found in the writings of both inspired and uninspired men. It is in such common use that no one is likely to mistake its meaning. The angel tells us that this is the meaning of the symbol in the present vision. The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. These four words mean substantially the same thing; but the word "peoples" points to the different tribes of earth; the word "multitudes," to the numbers which compose them; the word "nations," to the different governments under which they live; and the word "tongues," to the different languages which they speak. According to the angel's explanation this symbol has a two-fold meaning. In the first place, it represents a great multitude of people; and in the second place, it represents a great multitude of people composed of many different nations and languages. We have already reached the conclusion that the woman is a symbol of the corrupt church of Rome.

If this is correct, that part of the angel's explanation under consideration would lead us to expect that the church of Rome would bear rule over great multitudes of peoples, living under different governments, and speaking different languages. Is it necessary to show that this is actually the case? Many nations have been under its control. All forms of government, kings, empires and republics have felt its power. All languages have spoken its praises. No government which has ever existed on earth, not even the Babylonian, or the Grecian, or the ancient Roman, embraced so many nations, speaking so many languages. Men of every tribe brought presents to the Vatican, and kneeled side by side before the throne of Peter's successors. Men of every tongue united in the adoration of the holy father, and all languages blended together in praise at the command of Rome. It is therefore evident that this part of the angel's explanation corresponds with well known historical facts. The church of Rome ruled over many lands. The waters upon which the woman was sitting were "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

VI. We come now to the angel's explanation of THE GREAT HARLOT and the account of her final destruction. "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." For some reason which we cannot fathom, the angel gives an account of the harlot's destruction, before he tells us who she is. We will follow the angel's order, though in doing so we must remember what is made plain afterwards, that the harlot is the symbol of the church of Rome.

In the first place, we have the instruments of her destruction. They are "the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast"; that is, the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was to be divided. These were to eat the whore and make her desolate and naked. At first sight, there seems to be some contradiction between this declaration and the previous verses in which we are told that the ten kingdoms were to be united in supporting the Papacy. But we are to remember that different periods of history are here referred to. Though at one time the ten kingdoms would be united in supporting the Papacy, yet at a subsequent period, they, or rather their successors, would turn against the Papacy and be the means of its overthrow. Has not this prediction been in part fulfilled, and fulfilled so far that we can even now see the beginning of the end? England long ago revolted. Parts of what is now the German empire have for centuries shown their independence, and to-day all Germany is regarded by the pope as one of

his bitterest foes. The Papal States have thrown off the yoke, and now the congress of free Italy meets beneath the very shadow of the Vatican. France herself has struck more than one heavy blow against the power of which she has been the chief upholder. And we may well believe that the time is approaching when France, and Spain, and Austria will be forced to withhold their support, and then the power which they have been so long supporting will be left desolate and naked. When this is done, this prophecy will be fulfilled. The territory once occupied by the friends of the Papacy will be occupied by its foes. The ten kings which once gave their strength and power to the beast will hate it and be the instruments of its destruction.

In the next place, we have the destruction of the harlot minutely described. The ten kings will leave her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her in the fire. The figure seems to be that of one taken captive by cannibals. They strip him of his armor, they eat his flesh, they burn what remains in the fire, so that nothing is left of the captive but ashes and a memory. So these ten kings were to deal with the Papal power. They would strip her of her wealth, splendor and authority, and they would utterly blot her out, as if she was consumed in the fire. And as we have seen, the history of the past, the signs of the times, and the predictions of the inspired word lead us to believe that this day of utter destruction is approaching.

In the next place, the angel tells us that this destruction is in accordance with the purposes of God. "God hath put it in their hearts to fulfill his will." God has spoken much in the Scriptures concerning this anti-Christian power. He has spoken of its extent and its greatness; and he has put it in the hearts of the kings of the earth to support this power till these words are fulfilled. He has also spoken of its decline, its fall, and its utter destruction; and when the appointed time comes, he will put it in the hearts of the kings of the earth to withdraw their support, that these words may be fulfilled. This verse, then, is but a declaration of the principle which is to be found in many parts of the word. God is the ruler of the world; he puts down one and lifts another up; and he makes all things work together for good to them that love him.

Having thus declared the complete and terrible destruction of the woman, the angel, in the next place, plainly tells what is symbolized by her. "The woman is that great city." What great city could this be but Rome, which was then reigning over the kings of the earth, and which has through almost all the centuries since reigned over the kings of the earth? John could not but understand the language as referring to Rome; and the reference is so plain that all expositors agree in saying that Rome is described. The only difference among them is this: some suppose the reference is to pagan Rome; others to Papal Rome. In other words, some suppose the

reference is to the civil power of Rome; others to the church of Rome. But if we have been correct in our previous expositions, the reference must be to the latter. We have shown that the scarlet-colored beast is a symbol of the civil power of Rome; and if the scarlet-colored beast is a symbol of the civil power of Rome, surely the woman sitting on that beast would not be the symbol of the same power. Besides this, we have shown from common Scriptural usage that this impure woman must be the symbol of a corrupt church. If she is the symbol of a corrupt church, of what church could she be the symbol, save the church of Rome? We are therefore to understand the angel as saying, the woman which thou sawest is the great Papal church. This church fulfills all the requirements of the angel's explanation. She has reigned over the kings of the earth. The mightiest emperors and the noblest princes have kneeled at her feet, and have found their greatest pleasure in obeying her commands.

From all this we learn that that great ecclesiastical power, which has been so long the tyrant of the world, is to be destroyed. It requires but a little stronger breeze of popular sentiment, and the flames of her destruction will be fanned into a fury, which nothing earthly can control. It requires but a little more provocation, and those nations which have crippled the Jesuits, abolished the inquisition, and stripped the pope of his temporal possessions, and that mighty anti-Christian system, which so largely controlled the kingdoms and rulers of the earth for more than a thousand years, will come to an end for ever.

This is the angel's explanation of the apostle's vision, which is described in verses 3-6. The scarlet-colored beast is the symbol of the civil power of Rome. The seven heads are symbols of the seven-hilled capital of the Roman empire and of the seven forms of government under which Rome was ruled. The ten horns are symbols of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. The waters are the symbol of the many nations over which Rome ruled. The woman herself is the symbol of the church of Rome, which, when God's purposes are fulfilled, and through the instruments of divine appointment, will be left naked and desolate, and burned in the fire.

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## LECTURE LIII.

### THE FALL OF BABYLON.

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every

unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.—REV. 18: 1-8.

WE must not forget that our exposition has still to do with the events which are to take place under the outpouring of the seventh vial, which is described in chapter 16: 17-21. The period shadowed forth under this vial is to be the last period in the present order of things, the period which reaches to the introduction of the millennium. One great event which is to occur during this period is the final and complete destruction of the enemies of the Lamb and his followers. Of these enemies, the greatest is that ecclesiastical system, which has for more than a thousand years hindered the progress of the truth, persecuted the saints of the Most High, and perverted the worship of God with its traditions and idolatry. It is, therefore, no wonder that these visions of the future have special reference to the overthrow of that enemy. The vision of chapter XVII, describes this enemy and its destruction under the figure of a drunken harlot, who is at last forsaken and put to death by those whom she seduced. The vision of the chapter upon whose consideration we enter in the present lecture, describes the same enemy and its destruction under the figure of a luxurious and licentious city which is overtaken by the judgments of God. Both these visions shadow forth what is to be under the seventh vial. They refer to the same enemy and to the same destruction. They differ from each other, not only in employing different figures, but also in describing the destruction from different standpoints. The former describes it from the earthly side; the latter from the heavenly. The former reveals mainly the instruments by which the destruction was wrought; the latter reveals mainly the hand of God which employed these instruments. The former points us specially to the ten kingdoms which shall hate the whore, and leave her desolate, and naked, and burn her in the fire; the latter points us specially to "the Lord God who judgeth her." If this is true, if these two visions refer to the same power, and to the same events under different figures, and different aspects, then the angel's explanation of the former vision will help us to understand the latter.

It has been remarked that Babylon, in this chapter, symbolizes the same ecclesiastical power which is symbolized by the abandoned woman of the preceding chapter. Of this there can be no doubt. Babylon has been



mentioned before in these visions. In the sublime vision of the Lamb and his followers, which is described in chapter XIV, an angel appeared, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." This proclamation was explained as being a prediction of the downfall of the church of Rome. In the vision of the scarlet-colored beast the woman had written upon her forehead the name, "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." We have seen that this woman, whose name was "Babylon the great," is the divinely appointed symbol of the church of Rome. If this is the meaning of Babylon in the previous visions of this book, this must be its meaning in the present vision. And Babylon of old is an appropriate symbol of the church of Rome. That city, in the days of its glory, was the mistress of the world. It was distinguished for its luxury and its wickedness. It was, through its whole history, the great enemy of the ancient church, and beside its streams the captive saints sat and wept while their harps hung silent upon the willows. In all these respects Babylon resembles the church of Rome. It has been the mistress of the world; it has been distinguished for its luxury and wickedness; it has been the enemy and persecutor of the true church. Therefore, the great city of the Euphrates is an appropriate symbol of the church whose seat is the city of the seven hills. If we find that the description of this chapter corresponds with history, we may be sure that Babylon is by divine appointment the symbol of the church of Rome.

Taking it for granted that Babylon is such a symbol, we have in the chapter before us the following points: 1. The angel's proclamation of Babylon's fall; 2. A heavenly warning; 3. A great lamentation; 4. A great rejoicing; 5. The mystical city's final destruction. The first and second of these points will be sufficient to occupy our attention in the present lecture.

I. We are to consider THE ANGEL'S PROCLAMATION OF BABYLON'S FALL. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." The first thing which claims our attention is the angel by whom the proclamation is made. He is said to be another angel. It was not the angel who had explained to the apostle the meaning of the previous vision. It may be that this angel was one of the seven who had poured out the vials; but whether he was

or not, he was an angel commissioned of God to do this work, and therefore he was competent to make this announcement. The angel is described as having great power. We know but little of the angelic world, for little has been revealed to us; but we know that there are degrees among the first created sons of God. Some occupy higher positions and are possessed of greater powers than others; some have more difficult tasks to do and more holy missions to fulfill than others. This seems evident from the different names which are given to them. They are thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. They are angels, cherubs, seraphs and archangels. And this angel, who was sent to make the announcement of Babylon's fall, was one of high rank among his brethren. He had "great power." It was fitting that he should have great power, for he came to declare the destruction of one of the mightiest of the church's earthly foes. This messenger was also one of great glory. The earth was lightened by the bright shining of his glory. The inhabitants of heaven are generally represented as being effulgent as the sun. This is the idea which we attach to the word glory. It conveys to us the idea of brightness, and this idea seems to be well founded. Many of the descriptions of the Saviour and his holy angels and his redeemed saints represent them as clothed in white and glistening garments, shining as the sun in its noonday splendor.

In the next place, we have the manner in which this mighty and glorious angel made his proclamation. "He cried mightily with a strong voice." This manner is in keeping with the character of him who made the proclamation, and with the subject matter of the proclamation itself. An angel's voice must be like himself, powerful and majestic. The proclamation of the overthrow of such a power as spiritual Babylon should not be made in a voice trembling with weakness and fear.

In the next place, we have the announcement of Babylon's fall. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." On this announcement we need not dwell. We have already shown that by Babylon is meant the anti-Christian power of Rome. This announcement is a simple and solemn declaration that at the time referred to by the angel this power would have fallen. And besides this, the angel's announcement is an exact repetition of the announcement of another angel, recorded in chapter 14:8, and already explained. We may therefore pass over this part of the proclamation to notice others which are now brought before us for the first time.

In the next place, we have the angel's description of the desolation which followed the downfall of Babylon. This description of spiritual Babylon's desolation is substantially quoted from Isaiah's prediction of literal Babylon's approaching fall. "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of

doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their desolate palaces ; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." Isaiah 13: 20-22. It is well known that old ruins are a refuge for owls and jackals and other beasts and birds of prey. In such ruins every unclean and hateful thing makes its home. It was a common opinion among the ancients that demons inhabited abandoned cities and old ruins. To this common opinion there is reference here. Isaiah's prediction concerning literal Babylon has been exactly fulfilled. The great city of the Euphrates is but a heap of ruins ; its walls have fallen ; its palaces have crumbled to the dust ; its temples are shapeless mounds ; it has become a hissing and astonishment ; its inhabitants are unclean and hateful beasts and birds. Its glory has so completely departed that the most careful search can hardly discover the place where it stood. That city, which was once the proud capital of the world, is now one of the most desolate places on which the sun shines. And the angel in his proclamation assures us that as it is with literal Babylon, so it shall be with spiritual Babylon ; as it was with the city of the Euphrates, so it shall be with the church of which that city is the symbol. As they resembled each other in their prosperity, so they shall resemble each other in their desolation ; that is, the church of Rome is to be in the moral world what Babylon is in the natural world—a thing of the past, a heap of ruins, the abode of that which is hideous and loathsome.

In the next place, the angel tells us that the reason for Babylon's destruction and desolation is its influence over the nations. History tells us that ancient Babylon exerted a corrupting influence upon the nations of the earth. She made them intoxicated by holding the cup of her own luxury to their lips and making them drunk. She also, by her example, persuaded the kings of the earth to forsake the true God for the worship of idols. In other words, she led them to commit spiritual adultery. She also, through her great demand for delicacies and luxuries, enriched the merchants of the earth, and thus ensnared them in the deceitfulness of riches, and brought upon them the ruin which unsanctified wealth is accustomed to bring. For these reasons ancient Babylon was visited with destruction and desolation. For the same reasons spiritual Babylon, the church of Rome, will be destroyed and made desolate. She has intoxicated the nations of the earth ; she has seduced the kings of the earth to commit idolatry, which is spiritual fornication ; she has made the merchants of the earth rich through the abundance of her luxuries. Because of these things she is to be destroyed and made desolate.

This is the angel's proclamation. The church of Rome is presented to our notice, no longer under the figure of a harlot, but under the figure of a great, wicked and wealthy city. That city is to fall, and after its fall it

is to become a ruin and the home of every unclean thing. The reason of its destruction is its own sin, and its sinful influence upon the nations, and kings, and merchant princes of the earth. The angel points us to Babylon of old, the wonders of whose greatness are surpassed only by the wonders of its ruins, and says, in substance, as it was with Babylon, the enemy of the ancient church, so shall it be with spiritual Babylon, the enemy of the New Testament church.

II. We have, in verses 4-8, A HEAVENLY WARNING. This warning was not spoken by the angel who made the proclamation which we have just considered. It was made by another voice from heaven. Whether it was the voice of an angel we are not informed. It seems more probable that it was the voice of God himself, for the saints are here addressed as "my people," and this is a style of address which it is not likely an angel would employ.

In this warning, saints are, in the first place, charged to separate themselves from Babylon, which is doomed to destruction. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." There can be no doubt that the reference here is to Babylon, whose destruction is foretold in the previous verses; and if Babylon in the previous verses is the symbol of the church of Rome, then the saints are here commanded to separate themselves from that impure church. Two reasons for such separation are assigned. In the first place, if they remain in it, they would be partakers of her sins, for it is impossible to associate closely with sinners and not be corrupted. A man cannot take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned. In the second place, if they remained in it, they would be partakers of her punishment; for when a nation is punished for national sins, the innocent are involved in the punishment with the guilty. Famine, pestilence and war do not distinguish between the home of the sinner and the home of the saint. So if the corrupt church is punished for its sins, there is no discrimination among those who are found in it. If, then, the righteous would avoid such punishment when it comes, they must separate themselves from such a church. This heavenly warning, when considered as having been spoken with reference to the church of Rome, of which Babylon is the symbol, suggests these thoughts: In the first place, there were some in that church, who, notwithstanding all its corruptions, were the true people of God; and in the judgment of Christian charity we may believe that there are some in that church yet who are the true people of God. In the second place, it was the duty of the true people of God to separate themselves from that church. This justifies the action of the reformers at the time of the Reformation, and it should lead every Christian now to sever his connection with that church. In the third place, those who remain in

connection with that church must be regarded as partakers of her sins. In the fourth place, those who remain in this church and thus partake of her sins, must expect to be involved in her punishment. In the light of these statements, no duty is plainer than that of withdrawing from the church of Rome; and history teaches us that no duty has been attended with happier consequences, both to the individual and to the world.

In the next place, the voice from heaven reveals the reason why spiritual Babylon was to be visited with the plagues of God. "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Her sins were piled one upon another, until they seemed a mighty mountain, whose top reached the heavens. And these words, when considered with reference to the corrupt church of which Babylon is the symbol, remind us of the sins of which she had been guilty. She had broken all the commandments of the decalogue. She had other gods before the only living and true God. She had worshiped graven images. She had taken the name of God in vain, by giving his titles and attributes to those who were no gods. She had not remembered the Sabbath day, and she had appointed other days which she declared to be holier than the Sabbath. She had notoriously violated all the precepts of the second table of the decalogue, especially those which have reference to life, chastity and property. For a long time these sins seemed to be unnoticed. It seemed as if God had forgotten them. But when her cup of iniquity is filled to the brim, God will remember her sins and visit them with adequate punishment. When this time comes, those only will be safe who have obeyed the command to come out of her communion.

In the next place, the voice from heaven commands those who had felt the oppressions of spiritual Babylon to be the instruments of her destruction. "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double." It is not said to whom this command is addressed, but it would seem to be addressed to those who had been persecuted and wronged. These words, when considered with reference to that church of which Babylon was the symbol, teach us that those nations which had long groaned under the oppressions of that church, and in which so much blood had been shed, were to arise in their might and take ample vengeance. That this is to be the case, we have seen in our exposition of verses 16 and 17 of the previous chapter, where it is said that the ten nations, to fulfill the will of God, will hate the whore and make her naked, and desolate, and burn her with fire. The church of Rome had rewarded these nations for their devotion to her with wars and bloodshed, and now, under the command of God, they were to make war against her and shed the blood of her members. They were to give her an abundant, a double reward for all her works of cruelty. She had filled the cup of bitterness and death, and

pressed it to their lips, and now, under the command of God, they were to fill a cup with ingredients of double bitterness and press it to her lips. This prediction has not yet been entirely fulfilled, but in the events which have convulsed Europe for the last five hundred years, we may see the beginning of the end. The bitter cup is filling up, the terrible reward is being prepared.

In the next place, the voice from heaven declares the greatness of the punishment of spiritual Babylon. It would be in proportion to her pride, her luxury and her sin. "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." When these words are considered with reference to the corrupt church of which Babylon is the symbol, they teach us that her sin was great. She exalted herself, not only above the creature, but also above the Creator. She lived deliciously, as if luxury was the great end for which the earthly church was organized. She said in her heart, I am a queen; it is mine to rule the world, and to lord it over the bodies and the souls of men; I am no widow; I will see no sorrow, I am exalted so high that I am beyond the reach of mourning and calamity. Every one acquainted with the ecclesiastical power of which we are speaking, must know that these have been her characteristics. The pretensions and pride of the church of Rome could not be better described than by these words, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

Because of her sins, sudden and terrible destruction shall come upon her. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Her destruction is described under four figures, each one of which is terrible, but taken together they present a picture of unequalled horror. There should be death, mourning, famine and fire. Remember that this church, in the verses before us, is represented under the emblem of a city. Now imagine a city, to which have come on one and the same day, war, with all its horrors; the pestilence, with all its mourning; famine, with all its sufferings; and fire, with all its terrors, and you have the destruction of the corrupt church as it is described for us by the voice from heaven. From this destruction there will be no escape. It is the destruction of the Lord; and "strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." When he sends death, there is no healing; when he sends mourning, there is no comfort; when he sends famine, there is no relief; when he sends fire, it shall never be quenched. The punishment which is to come upon spiritual Babylon will be awful and inevitable. It will be in exact proportion to her sins. "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her."

And this is the great lesson which the present lecture suggests, and which

the history of the past and the revelations of the word of God confirm. God is a God of justice, and his punishments will be in proportion to the sins for which they are sent. It is so with churches. It is so with nations. It is so with individuals. Can there be any escape for us? Here is the answer and the comfort: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

## LECTURE LIV.

### THE FALL OF BABYLON—CONTINUED.

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold; and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.—REV. 18 : 9-24.

WE have considered the angel's proclamation, and the warning voice from heaven.

III. We come now to the third division in the chapter, viz.: THE GREAT LAMENTATION which would accompany Babylon's fall. This lamentation is described in verses 9-19. On this and the following divisions of the chapter, we need not dwell at any great length. This vision is so plain in itself, and it resembles so closely the visions we have already considered, that we can have no difficulty in understanding all that yet remains to be considered. If we bear in mind that the church of Rome is here shadowed forth under the symbol of a city, that this city is to be destroyed, and that all those who were directly or indirectly connected with that city are to be involved in the destruction, we will have no trouble in understanding the verses before us.

There are three classes who were specially affected by Babylon's fall, and who took noticeable part in the great lamentation. First among the mourners are the kings of the earth. "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." The figure is so graphically expressed that we can easily bring it before our minds. There stands the great city of spiritual Babylon. Her days of prosperity and luxury are ended. The wrath of God has visited her. The fire is consuming her palaces and her temples. The smoke of her burning goes up under heaven like the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah. The kings of the earth stand afar off on the surrounding mountains and look on. They remember the pleasures they have found within her walls; they think of the riotous living they enjoyed in her palaces; they see that these pleasures and this riotous living have now come to an end; and they bewail and lament the fate of the city. They cannot, they dare not, offer any assistance. They are afraid of the terrible torment which has befallen her. They can only stand at a distance and say, "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." What a picture of destruction! What a picture of helpless and hopeless sorrow! This prophetic picture has not yet been fulfilled. Its fulfillment is not to be till the seventh angel shall pour out his vial upon the air. But though this picture has not yet been fulfilled, it is not difficult to discover its general meaning. When the church of Rome is finally destroyed, the kings and governments which have sustained it and have been sustained by it, will be overwhelmed with sorrow and amazement, but they will not, they cannot attempt a rescue. They will stand afar off and lament the destruction which they are unable to prevent and unwilling to share. There are indications already that when the time comes, this will be the case. Many of the powers, which have long been in alliance with the Papacy, have shown themselves unwilling to risk anything to sustain its waning strength.



The kings of the earth are not the only mourners over fallen Babylon. The merchants of the earth stand beside the kings and join in the lamentation. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her ; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more ; the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls ! for in one hour so great riches is come to nought." The figure here is precisely the same as that we have considered. There stands the great city of spiritual Babylon. Her days of prosperity and luxury are ended. The wrath of God has visited her. The fire is consuming her palaces, and her temples, and her market places. The smoke of her burning goes up under heaven like the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah. The merchants of the earth stand afar off on the surrounding mountains and look on. They remember the merchandise they have sold in her streets, and the profits they have realized. They see that this market is closed, and that all hope of profit in this direction has gone for ever. They weep and mourn over her. They stand at a distance saying, "Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls" ! There is no need to explain each article of merchandise which is mentioned in the long catalogue here given. These articles of merchandise are gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, thyine wood, or as it is in the margin, sweet wood, ivory, precious wood, brass, iron, marble, cinnamon, odors, ointments, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, beasts, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves, and souls of men. The last clause of verse 13 is translated in the margin, and no doubt correctly, "the souls and bodies of men," an expression which describes the true nature of slavery. It is a traffic in the bodies and souls of men. It makes not only the physical but also the intellectual part of men an article of trade. These articles of merchandise were such as were used largely by the church of Rome in her public worship, and in the private life of her higher officials, and such as are to be found in the markets of any great city. They are here enumerated to give vividness to the picture. This is the figure presented in the words before us. The rich city is swept away by devouring

flames. The merchants cannot, dare not, render any assistance. They can only stand at a distance and weep and wail as they see the source of their wealth dried up. This prophetic picture has not yet been fulfilled; and it will not be fulfilled till the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air. However, the picture is so plain that it is not difficult to discover its general meaning. When the church of Rome is finally destroyed, those who have made themselves rich by her luxury and extravagance, will be astonished by the sudden and terrible destruction, will stand helplessly by, and will weep not only for Babylon but also for themselves.

The kings and the merchants of the earth are not the only mourners for fallen Babylon. All who go down to the sea in ships stand at their side and join in the lamentation. "And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off and cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate." Here the figure is precisely the same as the ones we have been considering. The only difference is, the first class of mourners were the kings of the earth, who had shared in Babylon's luxuries; the second class of mourners were the merchants of the earth, who had made themselves rich by traffic in Babylon's luxuries. This class of mourners are those who have brought the luxuries of earth from distant lands to the markets of Babylon. They are described as all shipmasters, all the company in ships, all sailors, and all who trade by sea. They, too, when they see the great city in flames, will stand afar off, unable to help, and cast dust on their heads, and weep and wail, saying, "Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate." This prophetic picture has not yet been fulfilled, but it will be when the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air.

Such is the great lamentation which is to be when spiritual Babylon is destroyed. This destruction will strike sorrow and terror into many hearts. Kings, merchants and sailors, all who have shared in the sinful luxuries of Rome, and who have enriched themselves by these luxuries, will lift up their voices in lamentation, the like of which has not been since men were on the face of the earth.

IV. But there will be joy at that day, as well as lamentation. This brings us to the next division of the chapter, viz.: THE GREAT REJOICING. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." According to the improved reading of the standard manuscripts, the first clause of this verse should read, "Rejoice

over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, apostles and prophets." As we have seen, there would be great mourning over the fall of Babylon. Kings, and merchants, and seamen would weep, but the inhabitants of the better land would rejoice over the destruction of Babylon, for they saw in her the great obstacle which was in the way of the progress of the gospel. There would be no weeping among the glorified saints. They would rejoice over the destruction of Babylon, for she had poured out their blood like water on the ground. There would be no weeping among the apostles, the twelve witnesses of the Lord's resurrection. They would rejoice over the destruction of Babylon, for they saw in her the great enemy of that Redeemer whom they preached and for whom they died. There would be no weeping among the prophets. They would rejoice over the destruction of Babylon, for they saw in her destruction the fulfillment of the inspired words they had spoken, and the evidence of the faithfulness of God. Nothing is here said of the church on earth; but the earthly church will that day join in the rejoicing for the same reasons which moved the inhabitants of heaven. This mystical Babylon had been the great enemy of the church. She had hindered and crippled the church in every possible way, and now, when God came taking terrible vengeance, all those who loved the church would rejoice. What a song of joy it will be in which all the glorified saints, and the apostles, and the prophets will join!

In this passage we have brought before us the two great divisions in the human family which are mentioned in many other places in the holy Scriptures. In the one are all those who are the people of God; in the other are those who are his enemies. In the one are those who love the church; in the other are those who hate the church. To one or the other of these divisions every soul of us must belong. There is no neutral ground. We must be with Christ, or against him. We must be either among those who weep, or among those who rejoice over Babylon's fall. When the Saviour tabernacled in the flesh, he said that he came not to bring peace to the earth, but a sword; to set the father against the son, the son against the father, the daughter against the mother, the mother against the daughter. This divine word has through all the centuries been receiving its fulfillment. The gospel of the Son of God has gone down through the nations and the homes of men, separating hearts which nothing else could sever. Out of the same mill one has been taken, and the other has been left; out of the same bed one has been taken, and the other has been left. So it will continue till the end. Even when the great Babylon is destroyed, some will weep and some will rejoice. But after Babylon is destroyed, there will be a new thing on the earth. All the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. No man will need to teach his brother the way to Zion, for all will be traveling thither. Then all that live on the earth will belong to the same family; they will be of one mind; they will join in the same song of thanksgiving.

V. We come now to the last division of the chapter, viz.: THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF MYSTICAL BABYLON. This destruction is pictured before us under a new emblem. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Whether this symbolic act was performed by the mighty angel who was introduced to our notice in the first verse of this chapter, we are not told, nor is it important for us to know. The act itself is easy to understand. The grain of the ancients was ground by hand. For this purpose small and portable millstones were to be found in every home. Such a millstone the mighty angel lifted in his hand and cast into the sea. When it sunk into the waters and the waves closed over it, not leaving so much as a scar behind, all trace of it was gone for ever. Even if the angel had not explained what he meant, we would have regarded his act as a symbol of utter destruction. But we are not left to conjecture. As he cast the stone into the sea, and as it disappeared from the sight and knowledge of the lookers on, he said, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." What are the points of resemblance between the angel's act and the destruction of Babylon? As the one was sudden, so the other shall be; as the one was with violence, so the other shall be. The idea is that the mystical Babylon would not fall through a long, gentle and natural decline, as the Roman power had done, but that it would come crashing down with violence through the application of external force. It might be remarked, in passing, that all the revelations of the Apocalypse represent the final overthrow of this anti-Christian power as a violent one. And as the stone which the angel cast into the sea could be found no more at all, so the destruction of Babylon would be so complete that not a trace would be left of the mighty power which had so long ruled the world.

The utter destruction of the mystical Babylon is described by the angel in the most graphic language. In order to understand his description, we must remember that he returns to the figure of a great city. But this city is no longer throbbing with life and activity. The noise and bustle of business are no more heard in its streets. The song of pleasure does not greet the ear. All sounds of life have disappeared. But we are anticipating. Let us, under the guidance of the angel, enter the city. We pass through its streets, but there is no sound of music. "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee." There was a time when the notes of song and the sound of musical instruments were to be heard on every hand. That time has passed away. The musicians have forgotten their skill. We still continue our journey through the silent streets, but there is no sound of business. "And no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee."

There was a time when the merchants of every land and clime bought and sold and wrangled in its market places, but that time has passed away, and the silence of midnight reigns where fortunes were made and lost. The grass is growing on the spot where thousands of busy feet have trodden. We continue our journey through the silent streets, thinking that the inhabitants have for some reason unknown to us retired to their homes; but there is no sound of life in any of the closed dwellings. "And the sound of the millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee." In passing through the streets of an Eastern city in the still hours of the early morning, it is customary to hear the noise of the millstones preparing the flour for the day's food; and this sound, accompanied as it usually is with the song of those who are grinding at the mill, gives assurance of life, activity and cheerfulness. The time was when mystical Babylon was full of these sounds of life, but that time has passed away. We continue our journey through the silent streets, thinking it is perhaps a day of fasting and mourning. We look up to the windows, but no ray of light shines out into the darkness. "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee." The time was when the revelers of mystical Babylon made its streets and palaces as light by night as by day, but that time has passed away. We continue our journey through the silent streets, but no sound of marriage revelry or of joy of any kind is to be heard. "The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee." What picture of desolation and loneliness can be more complete? No sound of music, no sound of business, no sound of daily life, no light in any home, no marriage festivities! Can there be deeper loneliness? When we compare this state of Babylon with what it once was, the loneliness seems all the deeper. This is the fate which awaits that ecclesiastical power which is symbolized by Babylon. If the angel is to be believed, the time is coming when it will be more desolate than that ancient Babylon which lived and flourished on the banks of the Euphrates, and which has for centuries been the home of every unclean and hateful beast and bird. The church of Rome resembles ancient Babylon in its pride, in its extent, in its wickedness, and in its hostility to the truth; so the former will resemble the latter in its destruction. It will be with violence, through the application of external force. So too the former will resemble the latter in its desolation. As in the former, the signs of human life and joy have long since ceased, so it will be in the latter.

This desolation will be brought upon her as a just punishment for her sins. Three prominent sins are mentioned—pride, deception and cruelty. In the first place, this desolation will be brought upon Babylon for her pride. "For thy merchants were the great men of the earth." It is a principle of universal application in the government of God, that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Mystical

Babylon was proud. She would deal only with the great ones of earth. She was satisfied only when kings and princes were her slaves. In the days of her exaltation she forgot the Master's command that the poor were to have the gospel preached to them.

In the second place, this desolation will be brought upon her on account of her deceptions. "For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." To the accusation of deceiving and deluding all nations, Rome must plead guilty. Who has pretended to exercise the power of God on the earth? To pardon sin, past, present, and to come? To work miracles of wonder and healing? Who has claimed divine attributes and received without a blush divine worship? History answers, without hesitation, the anti-Christian power of Rome. And the word of God tells us that because of these deceptions, she is to be left desolate and naked.

In the third place, this desolation will be brought upon her because of her cruelty. "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Who persecuted the two witnesses during the days of their witness-bearing? Who drove the woman into the wilderness? Who killed the few scattered saints during the dark ages? Who hunted the reformers as wild beasts are hunted, and taught men that those who put the reformers to death were doing God service? Who fertilized the plains of Italy, and the mountains of Switzerland, and the vineyards of France, and the market places of England, and the heather of Scotland, with saintly blood? Who glories in the memory of such days as that of St. Bartholomew? Who kindled the fires, and builded the prisons, and invented the racks, which have through all these ages been the monuments of the trials and the triumphs of the earthly church? Who erected the dungeons and the inquisitions among whose ruins the bones of unknown Christian martyrs are yet to be found? History answers, without hesitation, the anti-Christian power of Rome. And the word of God tells us that because of these cruelties she is to be left desolate and naked. When we remember the pride, the deception and the cruelty which have marked the whole history of Rome, and when we remember that God is powerful and just, we can no longer wonder at the angel's declaration, "With violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down." "Just and righteous are thy judgments, thou King of saints."

Our exposition of this chapter has established the following points: 1. Babylon is the symbol of the church of Rome. 2. The church of Rome is to be destroyed some time in the future, when the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air. 3. This destruction will be final and complete. As the church of Rome resembles ancient Babylon in its pride, and wickedness, and hostility to the truth, so it will resemble ancient Babylon in its terrible destruction and perpetual desolation. 4. When this anti-Christian power is destroyed, the last earthly obstacle in the way of the triumph of

the gospel will be removed, and the glorious dawn of the millennium will be near at hand. Let us, as followers of the Lamb, lay these lessons to heart, and so shall we be strengthened for every temporary defeat, and prepared for the final victory which is sure to come at the appointed time.

## LECTURE LV.

### HEAVENLY HALLELUJAHS.

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia! And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia! And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.—REV. 19: 1-6.

IN order to understand the meaning of this chapter, we must first determine the position it occupies in this series of visions. The great earthly enemy of the Saviour and his church is, in chapter XVII, described under the figure of a drunken harlot, who in the end was stripped of her gaudy robes and rich jewelry, and left naked, and desolate, and burned in the fire. In chapter XVIII, this same enemy is described under the figure of a great, proud and sinful city, which was at last so utterly destroyed, that the sound of music, of business, of daily life, and of joy was heard in it no more for ever. The destruction of this great enemy, in which all the universe of God will take an interest, is still further referred to in the chapter on whose consideration we now enter. In this chapter, the description of this destruction is completed, and we are brought to the dawn of the millennium. In the previous chapter, after the destruction of mystical Babylon, and the lamentations of kings, merchants, and those who go down to the sea in ships have been described, the inhabitants of heaven, who have seen, known and felt the power and hostility of Babylon, are exhorted to rejoice. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and apostles, and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." In the verses which form the subject of the present lecture, we have an account of the manner in which this exhortation is obeyed, and a description of the joy which filled the inhabitants of heaven when they heard the crash of Babylon's mighty fall. We need not wonder at this rejoicing on the part of those who stand

around the throne, for they take a deep interest in what is going on in the earth. They cannot be indifferent to the triumphs of the church and the defeat of the church's foes. If there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, we may be sure that there will be joy in heaven when such an enemy as the anti-Christian power of Rome is overthrown.

We need not expect to find any clearly defined order in the description of the heavenly hallelujahs. There is neither system nor logic in overwhelming joy. When great joy sweeps over any of God's intelligent creatures, they do not wait to measure their words or arrange their thoughts. It requires calmness and deliberation to prepare a systematic address. We need not therefore expect to find any clearly defined order in the heavenly hallelujahs, such as we have found in other sections of this book. These hallelujahs are the pouring out of grateful souls, souls too grateful to pay much heed to the method or manner of their gratitude. We will not, then, attempt any formal division of the words under consideration. We will take up the clauses and verses in the order in which they occur, and explain their connection and their meaning. O that our eyes might by faith be strengthened to see the destruction of the great enemy of the New Testament church, which is certain to come in the years of the future, that we might even now by anticipation join in the heavenly hallelujahs, in which, we hope, many of us will be permitted to join by and by, when we have taken our places in the church triumphant!

In considering these heavenly hallelujahs, the first thing which claims our attention is *the time* when they were heard. It was "after these things"; that is, the things which are described in the preceding chapters. The inhabitants of heaven did not shout their hallelujahs while the mystical harlot was clothed in her rich raiment, and while she was drunk and making others drunk with the blood of the saints, or while the mystical Babylon was full of pride and luxury, corrupting the world with her sinful practices. It was not till "after these things," when the mystical harlot was humbled, and the mystical city was a loneliness, that the voice of great rejoicing was heard. It was not till the millennium was about to dawn, that heaven breaks out into this sublime song of thanksgiving, a song surpassed only by that which the angels sung over the new-born babe of Bethlehem.

The next thing which claims our attention is *the persons* who sung these hallelujahs. "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven." They were in heaven; they were many in number; they sang with a loud voice. It is not an earthly congregation to whose praises we are listening. Though the saints on earth would rejoice in the victory of their King and in the defeat of their great enemy, the greatest rejoicing would be in heaven, for the inhabitants of the heavenly land would know better than their earthly brethren the importance of this victory and of this defeat. Though those



behind the battlements of heaven are safe from all harm, they take as deep an interest as ever in what is transpiring on the earth ; for the members of the church on earth and of the church in heaven belong to the same family ; they have the same Father ; they are partakers of the same triumphs. Therefore, when the church on earth is delivered, the church in heaven lifts up its voice in gratitude.

The next thing which claims our attention is *the song* which they sang. "Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God." The word "alleluia" is but the Greek form of the word "hallelujah." This word is used in the New Testament only in the chapter before us, but it is a familiar word to every reader of the Old Testament. It means "praise the Lord," or "praise Jehovah." It is an appropriate word to be introduced in this connection. The victory which they celebrated was one which God alone had wrought. The earthly church was a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, but it was through the power of its Lord. The power which was overthrown, defended on every side by superstition, and human depravity, and satanic cunning, was one which nothing but the Almighty could destroy. Knowing this, the inhabitants of heaven, though they themselves had taken prominent part in the conflict, though they had struck sturdy blows against this mystical Babylon, though some of them had laid down their lives for the cause they had espoused, took no praise to themselves ; they cried, "alleluia." As if they had said, "not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory." And the inhabitants of heaven not only cry "alleluia," they also ascribe "salvation" to the Lord their God ; that is, they recognize this deliverance which the earthly church had just experienced, as coming from the hand of God. They also ascribe "glory" to their God ; that is, they see in this victory of the church and this defeat of the church's foe, not so much glory for the church as for the church's King and Head. They also ascribe "honor" to their God ; that is, they see that this event which inspired their song will bring a great revenue of praise to him they worship. They also ascribe "power" to their God ; that is, they see in this event a mighty manifestation of the power of the Almighty one. And because they see these things, they ascribe salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto their God.

The next thing which claims our attention is *the reason* for these heavenly hallelujahs. Three reasons are here assigned. The first one is, "for true and righteous are his judgments." The judgments of God are the punishments which, as Supreme Ruler of the universe, he sends upon his people and upon those who are not his people. He visits the former with judgments, that he may turn them from their sinfulness ; he visits the latter with judgments, that he may punish and destroy them for their sinfulness. The latter judgments are the ones which are here mainly referred to. God has laid down certain principles on which his government

is conducted. All his judgments are in accordance with these principles ; that is, they are true. These judgments are also in accordance with justice and righteousness. No sickness, accident, death, or visitation of any kind comes upon the sinful individual or nation, which is not fully deserved. Therefore God's judgments are righteous as well as true. And the fact that God's judgments are true and righteous, is an occasion for rejoicing. Think for a moment how different our world would be, if these judgments were arbitrary and unjust ! The world would be better off without a governor. But to all those who have any correct knowledge of God, his judgments, no matter how severe they may seem to be, are a reason for joy. Does the deluge sweep away the antediluvian world ? Does fire from heaven burn up the cities of the plain ? Does Babylon fall before the assaults of its enemies ? Are the streets of Jerusalem cumbered with its slain citizens ? All lookers on, who have a right view of human sin and of divine justice, are ready to say, " true and righteous are thy judgments." As the inhabitants of heaven have a right view of human sin and of divine justice, they are represented as shouting " alleluia." They rejoice in these things, not because men suffer, but because God is glorified ; not so much because of the judgments themselves, but because behind the judgments they see the truth and righteousness of God.

But the inhabitants of heaven are moved to joy on this occasion, not so much because of the general judgments of God, as because of that particular judgment which is described in the preceding context. Therefore, the second reason for these heavenly hallelujahs is thus expressed : " For he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication." This reason binds the chapter we are now considering to the previous chapters as with a chain of steel. We are reminded of the woman whom we saw sitting on the beast which had seven heads and ten horns, and whom we have explained to be the symbol of the anti-Christian power of Rome. We are reminded of her sin, the spiritual adultery which she practiced, and in which the kings and nations of the earth became involved through her influence ; we are reminded of the judgment which came upon her, how she was left desolate, and naked, and burned in the fire. When the true and righteous judgments of God went forth against this enemy, and when they had accomplished the end for which they were sent, there was joy in heaven.

The third reason for the heavenly hallelujahs is thus expressed : " He hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." These scenes of blood have already been referred to. We have seen how this great ecclesiastical power, here symbolized, persecuted the saints. When these persecutions were brought to an end, and when the saintly blood shed in all the ages was avenged, there was joy in heaven ; for the church in heaven and the church on earth are but parts of the same family, and partakers

of the same joys and sorrows. When one is avenged, the other celebrates the victory.

This event, the avenging of the church, and the destruction of the church's enemy, was so glorious, that it called forth not one but many expressions of gladness. "And again they said, Alleluia"! The same heavenly congregation shouted the same hallelujahs for the same reasons which had moved them before. The destruction of this great enemy had such an important bearing on the welfare of the world, the prosperity of the church, and the declarative glory of God, that it moved them to repeated expressions of praise. And while they shouted hallelujah, "her smoke rose up for ever and ever." This ever ascending smoke was the "amen" with which earth responded to the worship of heaven. The figure which is here brought before us, is one of complete and final ruin. It reminds us of the inspired description of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It reminds us of the inspired description of the fate of the finally impenitent, whose place is in a fire which shall never be quenched. As the inhabitants of heaven see the smoke of the quenched burning, they are reminded of the suffering through which the church has passed, of all the cruelties of which mystical Babylon has been guilty, of the justice of God and of the glorious future when there will be none to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain, and again and again they say, "alleluia"! This calls to memory one of the wonders of heaven, a wonder which we are not yet fully able to understand. The saints on earth are filled with sorrow over the sins of men. Rivers of waters run down from their eyes when they see how wicked men go on in sin and refuse to keep the law of God. The saints on earth feel deeply the sufferings of men. When they see pain, or sickness, or calamity, they sympathize with those on whom they come. Noah, no doubt, sorrowed over the destruction of the antediluvian world. Abraham, no doubt, sorrowed over the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Saviour wept over Jerusalem when he thought of its impending desolation. All saints sorrow over the fearful judgments of God, when they come upon their fellows. But it appears that Noah, Abraham, and all the saints, when they reach the heavenly land, can look upon the judgments of God inflicted upon sinners, not only unmoved, but with thankful hearts. When they see the smoke of the torment going up for ever and ever, they can only cry, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." If it is asked, why this is so? we can only reply, we cannot tell. We know that there will be no tears in heaven, "for God shall wipe away all tears from all faces." We are so familiar with tears on earth, and with their causes, that we cannot conceive of a state in which tears will be unknown. But we may suppose that in that heavenly state, the saints will have such extended views of the divine plans, and such exalted views of the divine glory, that everything which advances those plans and magnifies that glory will be an occasion of rejoicing.

The heavenly rejoicing grows greater and louder as the magnitude of the victory becomes better understood. "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, alleluia"! The four living creatures and the four and twenty elders were introduced to our notice in one of the first of these Apocalyptic visions. Our attention has been so much occupied with other symbols, that perhaps we have well nigh forgotten their meaning. The four and twenty elders who sat on their seats around the great white throne of God are representatives of the church in heaven, whose members have ceased from their labors and have entered into rest. The four living creatures, with their eyes and their wings, which upheld the divine throne, are the representatives of the church on earth, whose members are yet actively engaged in proclaiming the divine glory and maintaining the divine government. These representatives of the two divisions of the church have been silent, as one sublime vision after another has passed across the heavenly stage; but now, when they see the great foe destroyed, they can keep silence no longer. They, too, lift up their voices, saying, "Amen, alleluia." Their "amen" is the expression of approbation of all that God has done, and their "alleluia" is the expression of praise for all that God has done in the destruction of the great enemy.

The heavenly rejoicing still grows greater and louder. "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." By whom this voice was uttered, we are not told. It seemed to issue from the great white throne itself; but it was not the voice of God, for it said, "Praise our God." It was rather the voice of those high and holy ones who stand nearest the divine presence. The meaning, then, must be that these high and holy ones not only praise God themselves for this victory, they also exhort others to join in praise; all God's servants, whether in heaven or on earth, all who fear him, that is, reverence and obey him, all of whatever rank or condition. For this victory is one of universal benefit. What a song of thanksgiving that will be! The high and holy ones nearest the throne lead the praise. The four living creatures and the four and twenty elders take up the song. The myriads of angels, whose voices have never been weakened or marred by sin, lend their aid. The one hundred and forty-four thousand, whose voices have been mellowed by their earthly experiences and their heavenly glory, join in the anthem. Dwellers here on earth catch the strain and the world becomes vocal with its Redeemer's praise.

Such was the song which the enraptured apostle heard that day, and which he tries to describe in the words which conclude the subject of the present lecture. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The apostle, in

his early life, when he had worshiped in the temple at Jerusalem, had been accustomed to hear the voice of a great multitude, as the Jews by tens of thousands united in the worship peculiar to the ceremonial law. In later years, he had heard by night and by day the wild waves of the Mediterranean beating against the rocky coasts of his island home, and the thunders echoing and re-echoing among the islands of the Egean sea, and he could compare the song which now went up from the ransomed of the Lord over the destruction of mystical Babylon to nothing but the voice of a great multitude, or to the voice of many waters, or to the voice of mighty thunderings. And the theme of their praise was still the same. "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." This destruction which they celebrated was the work of omnipotence. This enemy which was destroyed was the last earthly enemy which stood in the way of the Lord's universal kingdom. As they thought of that destruction and of that enemy, they sang with new meaning of the power of their omnipotent Lord. It is true, in one sense, that God reigns now and has always reigned; but in another sense, his kingdom is not universal. Ever since the fall, there have been rebels who have not been conquered, and enemies who have not been subdued. But when the time comes to which these words refer, the last rebel will be conquered and the last enemy will be subdued, and the followers of the Captain of our salvation can sing with a truer and fuller meaning than ever before, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

These heavenly hallelujahs suggest such thoughts as these: 1. The church on earth and the church in heaven are one. 2. The church in heaven has some knowledge of what is transpiring in the church on earth. 3. The church in heaven is deeply interested in the progress of the church on earth. 4. The change from the church on earth to the church in heaven will not be so great as we sometimes think. 5. The church in heaven and the church on earth will unite in the same song when the last enemy is destroyed.

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## LECTURE LVI.

### THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.—REV. 19: 7-9.

THE last enemy of the church has been destroyed, and the way is prepared for the church's glory and honor. This glory and honor are described under the figure of the marriage supper of the Lamb. In order to understand this figure, we must remember the position it occupies in this series of visions. The marriage supper of the Lamb is not spread till the mystical harlot is humbled and destroyed. This mystical harlot had long claimed to be the Lamb's wife, and she had been recognized by dwellers on the earth as the Lamb's wife, but at last her true character is exposed in the presence of the universe, and the true wife of the Lamb is exalted to her proper place. Or to drop the figure, the Papal church has for many centuries claimed to be the true church, and has received the honor which belongs to the true church. But the time is coming when this church will be unmasked and destroyed, and then the true church, which has been hiding in the wilderness from the persecutions of its enemies, will be openly honored by the Lord and his intelligent universe.

The figure of the verse before us is one which is easily understood, for marriage is something with which we are all more or less familiar. It is one which must claim our attention, for marriage is something in which we are all more or less interested. It is one which must give us new views of the love of Christ and the glory of God, for it takes the tenderest relation which exists among men on earth and exalts it to an image of that which is spiritual and divine. For this figure we are in great measure prepared by what is contained in other portions of the word of God. Psalm 45 points us dimly to a greater marriage than that of the king's son. The Song of Solomon, a book of inspiration which the church is not yet spiritual enough to understand fully, points us to a bridegroom mightier than the wise king of Israel and to a bride more beautiful than the princess of Egypt. Isaiah says, in the name of the Lord of hosts, "Thy Maker is thy husband." The same Lord says to his people, by the mouth of Jeremiah, "I am married unto you." The same Lord says to the same church, by the prophet Hosea, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercy." John the Baptist says, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." The Saviour himself tells us that the "kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king who made a marriage for his son"; and that the "ten virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." Paul, writing to a particular congregation, says, and what is true of a particular congregation is true of the whole church, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The same apostle, after speaking of the marriage relation and the duty of husbands and wives, says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." After all these revelations

which point with more or less clearness to the union which exists between the Saviour and his church, we are in some measure prepared for the sublime announcement, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

As has been intimated, the figure of this vision is peculiarly appropriate in view of the figures which have occupied such a prominent place in the previous visions. The false church has been represented under the figure of a gaudily attired daughter of sin, who claimed to be queen of heaven, and who received divine homage. When this abandoned woman is punished for her manifold iniquities, how appropriate and comforting it is to have our attention directed to her who in very truth is the Lamb's wife, and to the honor which awaits her on the Saviour's throne. These three points invite our consideration: 1. The bridegroom. 2. The bride. 3. The guests and their happiness.

I. We are to notice the person and character of THE BRIDEGROOM. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come." Let it be observed that the coming of this marriage is announced 'by the inhabitants of heaven. They call upon each other in glad alleluia to rejoice; and no wonder, for the enemy is destroyed, the government of God is established, the church is at last exalted to its true position; in one word, the marriage of the Lamb is come. They call upon each other to give honor to him; and no wonder, for this glorious consummation is brought about by his almighty power: he has conquered the enemies which seemed invincible; he has removed the obstacles which seemed insurmountable, and now at last the day of his marriage has come.

But when is it that this day is to come? It has not yet come. It is true, the Lord has espoused the church to himself, he has given her many tokens of his favor, many promises of future glory, many pledges of his affection, and much assistance in preparing her for her coming honor. But the marriage has not yet been consummated; he has not yet publicly recognized the church as his wife; he has not yet compelled the universe to give her that reverence which the Lamb's wife is entitled to receive. All this is to be in the future. When the seventh vial is poured out, when the last earthly enemy of the church is humbled and destroyed, when the millennium is about to dawn, the Saviour will give the church the wedding garments he has prepared for her—he will openly acknowledge her as his ransomed bride, and compel all to give her homage. When that hour, which is yet future, is marked on the dial plate of time, the event which is described as the marriage of the Lamb will have come. For that hour we are waiting, and in its honors we may hope to share. These honors are hard to understand as yet. They are so much greater than any we have yet experienced, that we cannot comprehend them. We see as through a

glass darkly. We know only in part. But when we stand upon the shores of the crystal sea and are numbered among the invited guests, then the dark glass will be removed from before our eyes, imperfect knowledge will give place to perfect, and we will know what is meant by the marriage of the Lamb. Still, we need not be content with entire ignorance. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, by meditating upon the revelations of God, we can form some conception of the honor which awaits us. If we would have any proper idea of this honor, we must first of all notice the person and character of the bridegroom. This bridegroom is here described as the Lamb. Who is the Lamb? This question is easily answered. The Lamb is he of whom the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"; he "who was led as a lamb to the slaughter"; he who stood in the midst of the throne, and who alone was found worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof. The Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son and the equal of the Father. This is the first thought we should fix in our minds when we make this spiritual marriage a study. The bridegroom is divine. It is the Great King who makes a marriage for his divine and equal Son. Of him the Bible is full. Of him the patriarchs thought, the prophets spake, and the evangelists wrote. In the garden of Eden he was promised as the seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent; and in Gethsemane and Golgotha he is seen fulfilling this promise in actual conflict with sin and Satan, leading them captive at his will. Sometimes he is revealed to us as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast. Sometimes he is revealed to us as a man tempted by the devil, persecuted by his relatives, and crucified by his enemies. But though much is revealed of him, we are not able as yet to understand his divinity. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high—we cannot attain to it. But we would suppose that when the High and Holy One, who inhabits eternity and its praises, chooses one whom he would honor with a place on his throne, his choice would fall on one of exalted character. Let us then be prepared for an unparalleled surprise when we come to speak of the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Again, the bridegroom is holy. This is implied in the figure of the text. He is a lamb, and a lamb is now, and ever has been, an emblem of innocence. The fitness of this symbol is so generally recognized, that "as innocent as a lamb" has passed into a proverb. It was necessary that the Redeemer should be sinless, for if he had had sins of his own he could not have made atonement for the sins of others. If it could be shown that Jesus, while he was here on earth, ever sinned in thought, or word, or deed; that he ever murmured at the hardness of his lot, while for thirty years he was compelled to labor for his daily bread; that he ever cherished a sinful thought when, as the miracle-working Messiah, he wearily wandered up



and down through Judea and Galilee without a place where to lay his head ; that he was ever betrayed into a sinful expression while passing through the agonies of crucifixion ; if, we say, it could be shown that Jesus while on earth ever sinned in thought, or word, or deed, the whole gospel plan of salvation would fall to the ground. And yet the last few days of his life seem to furnish convincing proof of his guilt. The Sanhedrim, the highest court of the Jewish nation, found him guilty of blasphemy ; Pilate, the Roman governor, sentenced him to death. Could these things be, if he was innocent ? It would seem not ; and yet we have the most convincing proof of his innocence. Pilate and Herod both say that they could find nothing worthy of death in him. The Roman centurion who had charge of the execution was compelled to exclaim, "Surely this was the Son of God." The whole gospel narrative, from the beginning to the end, shows that he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. We would certainly suppose that when he makes choice of one whom he would honor with a place on his throne, he would choose one who was distinguished for holiness. Let us then be prepared for an unparalleled surprise when we come to speak of the bride, the Lamb's wife.

II. Who is **THE BRIDE**, the Lamb's wife ? Though the bridegroom is divine, the bride is human ; for every one, acquainted with the figures of Scripture, must know that this is the endearing appellation which the Saviour applies to his ransomed church ; not to the individual members of the church ; not to the church as it now exists in the world, but to the church invisible, one and inseparable through all the dispensations and through all the ages, through time and through eternity. Jesus places upon his throne of glory, not the angelic world in which sin is unknown ; he passes by the angels, and the cherubs, and the seraphs, and the arch-angels, and says to the human church, I have espoused you to me for ever.

There are countless wonders in the Saviour's history, but his espousal of the church is the crowning wonder of them all. There are wonders in the Saviour's names. In one place he is called the Son of God ; in another place he is called the Son of man. On one page of inspiration he is said to be the God over all, blessed for ever ; on the next he is said to be bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The prophet tells us, "unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given" ; and with the very next breath he tells us, "his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." There are wonders in his earthly life. He was born as other children are, but over the new-born child a multitude of the heavenly host sang songs of praise till the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem heard and worshiped. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes as other children are, but the star-guided Magi of the East bowed the knee before him and offered gifts and homage. He was hap-

tized as others are, but from the open heavens and the overshadowing cloud of glory, a voice was heard, saying, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He hungered as other men do, but he fed thousands in the wilderness of the Jordan. He thirsted as other men do, but he could change water into wine. He grew weary as other men do, but he rose from his slumber to still the storm. He was poor in this world's goods, but a fish of the sea came of its own accord with money in its mouth to pay his tribute. He was holy and his companions were the holy angels, but in his dying hours he was compelled to associate with the vilest of the vile; thieves and robbers were his fellow sufferers. He died as a criminal dies, but nature gave visible signs of sorrow. He died as an outcast, but in accordance with ancient prophecy, he made his grave with the rich in his death. These are wonders, but the greatest wonder of all, the one before which all others pale, is seen in this spiritual marriage. Here is a miracle of love and mercy, before which all other miracles are less than nothing. Where shall the King of kings find a suitable bride? Where shall the Son of God find a fitting companion? The bride, the Lamb's wife, is the church chosen from among men.

But though the bride is human, and, as a matter of course, sinful, she is, through divine grace, prepared for the high station to which she is called. This preparation is in part her own work, but it is mainly the work of her Lord. Both parts of the preparation are brought out in the words before us. We are told in one verse "his wife hath made herself ready," and in the next we are told, "and to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." The church makes herself ready against that day. She works out her salvation with fear and trembling. Or in the figurative language before us, she puts on her beautiful robes. But these robes she has not woven for herself; they are prepared for her and given to her by her Lord and Saviour. These robes are the righteousness of the saints; not their own righteousness, but the imputed righteousness of their Lord, which he has wrought out, and which they obtain by faith, the righteousness of which Paul speaks when he says, "and being found in him, not having on mine own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." When the church is thus arrayed and brought home to glory with every trace of her former vileness washed away, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, she is not unworthy to take her seat on the throne of heaven beside the King of kings, and to be recognized by the universe as the bride, the Lamb's wife.

III. We were to notice THE GUESTS AND THEIR BLESSEDNESS. "And he saith unto me," that is, the angel who was making these revelations, saith unto me, "Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage

supper of the Lamb." This sentiment is not one of mere temporary value. It is one which will live for ever. It contains eternal truth. It is worthy to be written for the permanent instruction and comfort of the church. Therefore the angel commanded the apostle to "write" it, that it might be kept among the choicest treasures of the church.

Who are the guests? While the church is described under the figure of a bride, the individual members of the church are described under the figure of guests. With regard to these guests, it is to be noticed, that they are called, or invited. None but the invited are permitted to be present. They are not invited because of their rank, or their riches, or their learning. Nor are they invited because of previous friendship; they are first chosen, then they are made friends. They are chosen because of the infinite love of their Lord. There is a feast to which all men are invited, but it is not the marriage supper of the Lamb; it is the gospel feast. To this feast the broad invitation is in these words, "unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." But those who go forth to bear the invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb, can say nothing more than this, "eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The blessedness of these invited guests will be as great as they are able to enjoy. Without doubt, there are degrees of happiness in heaven as there are on earth. "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; but they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." But while there are degrees in blessedness, every guest will be as blessed as it is possible for him to be. Every vessel of glory will be full. Every star in the heavenly firmament will shine its brightest. Their blessedness will be uninterrupted and everlasting. In this respect, the happiness of the "here" differs from the happiness of the "hereafter." At God's right hand is fullness of joy and pleasures for ever more. God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Their blessedness will exceed the blessedness of the angels; for while the angels stand at an adoring distance and cast their crowns upon the jeweled pavements of heaven, the saints sit upon the throne; for they are not only guests, but also the bride, the Lamb's wife.

This revelation of the relation which exists between the divine Saviour and his human church is almost too wonderful for our faith. The angel saw that through the greatness of our unbelief we would stagger at this sublime truth. Therefore he says, "these are the true sayings of God." What God says will surely come to pass. The enemies of the church are to be defeated. The church is to be victorious and to be exalted to the throne of heaven, the high position to which she has been chosen, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The hour of this blessedness has not yet come; but when the seventh vial is poured out, when mystical Babylon,

the mother of harlots, is destroyed, the marriage of the Lamb will come, and the church, arrayed in her beautiful garments, will be brought home to the Father's house, with songs of rejoicing on every side; and blessed are they who are called to this marriage supper of the Lamb.

Who does not desire to be a partaker of this happiness? The way is open. The invitation is extended. True, the time is not yet, and it will not be for years to come, but these are the true sayings of God; and we can wait. The waiting seems long; the church is hindered by its enemies and laughed at by many it comes to save. Lest we should be discouraged while we wait, we are permitted to have some foretastes of the blessedness of that heavenly marriage supper. Such a foretaste is experienced at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; for there is a resemblance between the sacramental supper and the marriage supper. The same Saviour is present; the same guests are invited; the same love is manifested. Those who worthily partake of the Lord's Supper have an earthly foretaste of the blessedness of those who are called to the marriage of the Lamb.

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## LECTURE LVII.

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### ANGEL WORSHIP AND THE MIGHTY CONQUEROR.

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.—REV. 19: 10-16.

I. THE incident which is recorded in the beginning of the subject of the present lecture need occasion no surprise. The apostle was but a man, and liable to be influenced by human feelings. In the splendor of these visions, and in the sublimity of these revelations, we sometimes lose sight of his humanity; but we are not permitted long to forget that he is our fellow-servant. Carried away by what he had seen and heard, HE WOULD WORSHIP THE ANGEL who had shown him these things, but he is hindered in the execution of his idolatrous purpose. "And I fell at his feet to worship

him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus : worship God : for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." We may wonder at his purpose, which is so foreign to his devout and loving spirit, and so different from what we would expect of the beloved disciple. But after all, there is no room for wonder. Think of what he had seen and heard ! Think of the conflicting emotions which must have swept over his soul as he had looked upon the rapidly changing visions, and had in some measure comprehended their meaning ! He had seen the true church in deepest adversity ; he had seen the great enemy of the true church in the height of its prosperity ; and when he had seen this, his soul was cast down within him ; the waves and the billows went over him, and deep called unto deep at the noise of God's waterspouts. But lo ! the scene suddenly changes. The mystical harlot is divested of her royal robes and burned in the fire. The mystical Babylon is shaken to its foundations and left in ruins and desolation. A great lamentation goes up from those who shared in her sins and who had been made rich by her iniquities. A great song of thanksgiving, like the voice of many waters or of mighty thunderings, sweeps over the celestial plain—a song in which the angelic host, the four beasts, the four and twenty elders, and the multitude of the redeemed unite, saying, "Alleluia ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Hardly had the last echoes of this song died away, when the apostle saw the church clothed in its spotless robes, which are the righteousness of the saints, publicly acknowledged by the Saviour as his ransomed bride and exalted to her place on the throne of her divine Lord ; and he was commanded to write, "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." A great load was lifted from his heart. The church persecuted so long would triumph ; the church despised so long would be honored. It is no wonder that he fell at the feet of the angel who had revealed these things. He was overcome by the majesty of the heavenly messenger and by the joy and sublimity of the truths he had heard ; and in the overflow of his gratitude he had fallen upon the earth in that posture of adoration which was so common in the East.

It may be that he mistook the character of the heavenly messenger. He may have supposed that he was the Messiah himself, who was now addressing him ; but if so, the error into which he fell was soon corrected. The angel said unto him, "See thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." In this language, the angel not only refused the proffered worship—he also announced his true character : he was John's fellow-servant ; he was engaged in the service of the same God ; he was advancing the same cause ; he was honoring the same Redeemer. He was also of the brethren that have the testimony of Jesus ; that is, of Christians who are witnesses for the Saviour. The great

duty of Christians here on earth, from the highest of them to the lowest of them, is by their words, and their acts, and their profession, to bear testimony for Jesus. To them all the Lord has said, "Ye are my witnesses." But in this respect they are not alone. The angels are their fellow-servants in bearing testimony in the same cause. Here let us stop for a moment to wonder at the honor which has been conferred on us. It is an honor to labor in the service of such a master as Christ is. It is an honor to labor in a cause which has for its object the greatest happiness of the largest number. Even if we were alone in this service and this cause, the honor would be beyond our comprehension. But it is an honor to have such fellow-laborers as the holy angels. If at any time we are discouraged at the greatness of our work, and at the little progress we are making, it will be for our encouragement to listen to the words of this angelic messenger: "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus."

As the angel was but a fellow-servant, he could not receive the worship of John. He points him to the only true object of adoration, saying, "Worship God." This angelic declaration, if we take it for granted that it is true, cuts off at once and for ever all idol worship and all worship of saints. If the angel is to be believed, the divine honor which has been paid by so many deluded souls to the Virgin Mary and to others of our fallen race who may have been distinguished for their piety or their usefulness, is a dishonor to God. Nothing is more clearly revealed in the Scriptures than that divine worship is to be paid to God alone. Nothing is more sternly rebuked than idolatry of every form and kind. And there is need. Even John, more highly favored than those born of women are wont to be favored, was in danger of sinning in this regard. If John was in danger of sinning in this regard, it need occasion no surprise that men less enlightened than he have fallen down to worship stocks, and stones, and canonized saints. It need occasion no surprise that not only the angel, but also the Saviour himself, and the church, and the ministers of the church in all ages, should be called upon many a time to say, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

The reason which the angel assigns why no worship should be paid to him is not difficult to understand. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." It is as if he had said: We are all engaged in the same work; the holy angels, you apostles and preachers of the gospel, the prophets of the old dispensation, and all who love the Lord Jesus, are witnesses for Jesus; and our witness is the very spirit of prophecy. If we are engaged in the same work, one may not receive the worship of another. The angel's reason is founded on manifest truth. There can be no doubt that the great mission of the angels is to bear testimony for Jesus. Nor can there be any doubt that this is the great mission of those whose duty

it is to preach the gospel to the ends of the world, for the burden of their message is, and ever must be, "Christ and him crucified." Nor can there be any doubt that this is the great mission of all believers, for they are to be living epistles known and read of all men, and the chief lesson of these epistles is, "Jesus is able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Nor can there be any doubt that this is the great mission of the Old Testament prophets. Their writings all point to Christ; their words are fulfilled in Christ. Nor can there be any doubt that this is the great mission of the angels, for "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"? As they waited on Christ during the whole of his earthly pilgrimage, so they now wait on the disciples of Christ. It is therefore true that the spirit of prophecy, whether it is found in the writings of the Old Testament prophets, or in the inspired declarations of the apostles, or in the words of commissioned preachers, or in the lives of saintly believers, or in the holy ministry of the unfallen angels, is the testimony of Jesus; that is, they all bear testimony in favor of Jesus. If this is so, then one may not claim the homage of another. An apostle must not worship an angel, nor a believer worship an apostle; but all should worship God. They are fellow-servants and brethren, and their duty one to another is love and harmony in their common work, and not worship.

It is worthy of remark that though the apostle was so plainly rebuked on this occasion, he afterwards fell into the same error. After another angel had described to him the glories of the New Jerusalem, he was so carried away by the brightness of the revelation and the joys of anticipation that he says, "And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." Chapter 22: 8, 9.

II. We come now to another vision, which in sublimity and comfort is worthy of a place beside any we have already considered. It is a vision of final triumph and conquest. This vision follows immediately after the marriage of the Lamb, for the incident recorded in verse 10 is to be regarded as a parenthesis. We will not be able to discuss the whole of this vision in the present lecture. We will have to confine ourselves to the description of THE CONQUEROR. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself; and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in

heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." No one can read these words without being convinced that the conqueror is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The scene of this vision of the final conquest is that open heaven into which the apostle had been carried in the spirit, and in which he saw the most of those visions which have heretofore occupied so much of our attention. On this celestial plain, John saw the symbol of a white horse. This is not the first time this symbol has made its appearance in the Apocalypse. In chapter 6: 2, it is said: "And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer." This vision was explained as shadowing forth the prosperity and victories of the Roman empire during the period which followed the apostolic age. It is evident that the symbol of the white horse is the same in both visions, though there is a noticeable difference between the riders. Of what is a white horse the natural symbol? In our day a horse might be a symbol of peace and agricultural prosperity, but this would not be the case in the times and the lands in which the Bible was written. Then the horse was generally used in war, and it was the symbol of war. White horses occupied a prominent place in the triumphal processions of the victorious Roman generals. Therefore a white horse becomes a symbol of victory and its consequent prosperity. This was its meaning under the first seal. It shadowed forth the Roman empire during the period when its armies were victorious in every part of the world, and when the empire enjoyed unparalleled prosperity. We may, then, conclude that the white horse which makes its appearance in the present vision is a symbol of victory, not however of any earthly victory, for the characteristics of the rider on this horse are not of the earth, earthy; they reveal his deity. Let us examine these characteristics one by one.

In the first place, we are told that he who sat upon the white horse "was called Faithful and True." The Messiah is here described, not by his names, but by his attributes. He has laid down certain principles by which he governs the world. He has given to his church great and precious promises. Sometimes it seems as if these principles were violated, when the wicked prosper and have all their heart could wish. Sometimes it seems as if these promises were forgotten, when the church is despised and persecuted. But notwithstanding this seeming, the Messiah is faithful and true; faithful to the principles he has laid down for the government of the world, and true to the promises he has given his church. In the opening vision of



the Apocalypse, he reveals himself as "the faithful witness." In the epistle to the church of Laodicea, he calls himself "the faithful and true witness." In the closing vision of the Apocalypse, he tells us that his "sayings are faithful and true." Then let us rest with confidence upon his faithfulness and truth. For a time everything may seem to be against us, but in the end all things will work together for good to them that love God. For a time the church may seem to be dying, but in the end it will come forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Oh! the weakness of our faith! It can look only at the now and the here. It forgets that God is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness. It does not remember that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It forgets that the Saviour is faithful and true, and that in his own good time and way he will manifest his faithfulness and truth.

In the next place, we are told of him that sits upon the white horse, that "in righteousness he doth judge and make war." The Messiah is here presented to our faith, not as prophet or priest, but as king. As the Sovereign of the universe, it is his to judge the quick and the dead, to sentence those who have violated his law, and to justify the obedient. And his judgments are righteous. They are in accordance with the laws he has laid down for the government of men. He is not blinded by prejudice or influenced by partiality, or deceived by misrepresentation. This thought may well cause the sinner to tremble, and give confidence to those who believe, for we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The Messiah, as the Sovereign of the universe, also makes war in righteousness. Sometimes he sends and sometimes he leads his armies forth to victory. But the wars in which he engages are not wars of ambition or conquest; they are wars to save the righteous and to punish the wicked. In one word, they are wars of righteousness. This thought may well cause the sinner to tremble, and give confidence to those who believe, for all those who are on the side of the Messiah will be victorious, and those who are on the side of his enemies will be destroyed.

In the next place, we are told of the Messiah that "his eyes were as a flame of fire." We are here reminded of him whom John saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and of whom it is said, "his eyes were as a flame of fire"; words which reveal the fact that nothing can be hidden from him, and that his fiery glance will burn up all his enemies round about.

In the next place, we are told that "on his head were many crowns." This indicates his universal reign. He is King of the church, and King of the world, and King of the universe. He is Lord of creation, and of providence, and of redemption. He is King of all kings, and Lord of all lords. Therefore, on his brow the crowns of all kings and of all kingdoms are wreathed into one.

In the next place, we are told that "he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself." This name was probably written upon the frontlet of his many crowns. What that name is we are told in the next verse. It is "The Word-of God." By this name he is revealed in many parts of Scripture, but especially in that wonderful passage of the gospel by John which begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Though we know what this name is, its meaning is too wonderful for us to understand. It has a height, and a depth, and a length, and a breadth which we cannot measure. It involves the sacredness of the relation to the Father, which none but the Messiah himself can understand. Men may discuss this mysterious name; they have discussed it till the discussion has become a weariness; volume after volume has been written to explain its meaning; but still no man can know all that is expressed by it, or implied in it. His name is a name which is above every name.

In the next place, we are told that "he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"; or rather, as it is in the standard manuscripts, "sprinkled with blood." This does not refer to his crucifixion, though it is true that at that time his garments were stained with his own blood; but that time was now long past. He is no longer a sacrifice, but a king. He is no longer persecuted, but a conqueror. His vesture is stained no longer with his own blood, but with the blood of his enemies. There is no better commentary on these words than is to be found in the sublime language of Isaiah: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."

In the next place, we are told that "his name is called the Word of God." Of this name which no man can know, we have already spoken. What has been said need not be repeated. This is an appropriate name. As a man reveals himself by the words which he speaks, so God has revealed himself in his Son, who is the express image of his person. Therefore, the incarnate Son is well called the Word of God, for he is the message of God to the dying world. Because of the appropriateness of this name, John loves to use it, for it denotes better than any other the divine nature of the Saviour.

In the next place, we are told that "the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." The great conqueror is accompanied by his victorious hosts. The army of

the redeemed follows him not to engage in the conflict, for their robes are white and clean, and not sprinkled with blood. The battle is fought and the victory is won by the Saviour alone. The army of the redeemed follows him to be witnesses of that victory, and to partake in the joys of that triumph. They are clothed in white robes as a symbol of their innocence; they ride upon white horses as a symbol of their victory; they follow the great conqueror as a symbol of their loyalty and obedience.

In the next place, we are told that "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." That is, the word which goeth out of his mouth is like a sharp sword with which to smite the nations. The battle is to be fought with the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow."

In the next place, we are told that "he shall rule them with a rod of iron." His power will be so great that none will be able to overthrow or resist it, a fact which the Psalmist had long before stated. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." A similar truth is suggested in the next clause, where it is said, "And he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." As grapes are trodden under foot in the wine-press, so would he tread down his enemies, a fact which is stated in the sublime words of Isaiah already quoted.

Finally, we are told that "he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." This name requires no explanation. The conqueror was to rule over rulers. The most powerful on earth would be weak before him. Kings and their subjects, lords and their servants would alike feel the weight of his victorious sword. And this name would be written on his vesture and on his thigh, that is, on the hilt of his sword, so that all men might see it; and seeing it might be astonished.

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## LECTURE LVIII.

### THE FINAL CONQUEST.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth,

and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.—REV. 19: 17-21.

THE present lecture has to do with the same victory which engaged our attention in the last lecture. If we were able to appreciate in any proper measure the character of the great conqueror, we are prepared to expect a victory of unparalleled greatness and completeness.

I. Our expectations are raised still higher by THE ANGELIC PROCLAMATION which begins the subject of our lecture. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." This announcement was made by an angel, probably a different one from the angel who had appeared to John before. The number of angels, who make their appearance in connection with the visions of this book, is so great that it excites our wonder. Yet why should it? God's angels are numbered by ten thousand times ten thousand, and they are deeply interested in the affairs of the earthly church. Look how they clustered around the King and Head of the church during the time he tabernacled in the flesh. An angel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of the promised Saviour. A multitude of angels sang a song of praise when that Saviour was born in Bethlehem. Angels came and ministered to him after his temptation. Angels strengthened him after the agony of Gethsemane. Angels sat in his empty sepulcher and announced his resurrection to the sorrowing disciples. Angels surrounded him as he ascended from the summit of Olivet and pointed the apostles to his second coming, which would be without sin unto salvation. In a similar way angels cluster around the saints during their earthly pilgrimage. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"? They encamp about them by night and by day, and defend them from their dangers; they bear up to heaven the prayers of the saints, and bring back to earth the divine blessing, ascending and descending on the ladder of God; they gather around the saints in their dying hours and bear their freed spirits up the unknown path to Abraham's bosom; they watch over their sleeping dust till the resurrection; and in the great harvest day of the world's history, they will bring the glorified bodies of the saints to the heavenly garner, for "the angels

are the reapers." And it is no wonder that they have much to do in these visions which unfold the future history of the church. They stand around the throne and help to swell the anthems of the upper sanctuary; they blow the trumpets; they pour out the vials; they are prominent actors in the scenes which appear on the heavenly stage; and they explain the visions to the apostle, so far as explanation is necessary or proper. And now another angel is seen standing in the sun. The description is simple as it can be, and yet it is sublime above our comprehension. A heavenly being stands in the midst of the brightest orb of which we have any conception, and yet he is not consumed, nor is his brightness dimmed by the dazzling splendor of the light in which he stands. Why he has his place in the sun we are not informed, but it is likely that it is only to give impressiveness to the scene, and to prepare us for the grand consummation towards which we are hastening. It is difficult to conceive of an image more sublime than this, or one which could awaken greater expectations.

This angel made proclamation to the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, that is, to all birds of prey such as hover over a field of battle, to "come and gather themselves together unto the supper of the great God"; or rather, according to the improved reading of the standard manuscripts, "unto the great supper of God." The imagery is easily understood. The scene which these words call up to our minds is one which has often been witnessed on the earth. There was to be a great slaughter; the bodies of the dead would be left unburied as a feast for unclean birds; it would be as if a great supper had been prepared for the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven. It is called the supper of God, because he prepares it by the destruction of his foes. It is not necessary to enter upon a minute explanation of the several classes of these foes as they are here enumerated. Kings would be found among the slain, and those who are subordinate to kings, who are here called captains; mighty warriors would be stretched upon the field of battle, beside the horses upon which they rode; the blood of freemen and of slaves, of small and of great, would be mingled. But these slain would all be foes of God; they would all be of the number of those who worshiped the beast and received his mark in their foreheads. To this great slaughter the angel of the sun invites the birds of prey. The image is indeed a terrible and a loathsome one. But how delicately it is presented! How differently it would have been handled by a mere human penman! He would have taken us out to the field of battle; he would have described the conflict, the charge and the retreat; the shouts of triumph and the groans of the suffering; the ghastly heaps of slain and the garments rolled in blood. But not so the angel. He takes all this for granted, and simply calls on the fowls of heaven to come to the supper which has been prepared for them. Our histories are full of descriptions of battles, but no description equals in conciseness, in sublimity, and in suggestiveness,

the one contained in the angel's proclamation to the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, "to come and gather themselves together unto the great supper of God." This proclamation, together with the appearance of the great conqueror, must lead us to expect a great victory and a terrible defeat. And as we will see in the sequel, our expectations will not be disappointed. The last obstacle that prevents the dawn of the millennium morning will be removed, and the church, under its glorious King, will be triumphant.

II. Let us now turn to THE RESULTS OF THIS GREAT CONFLICT, of which the notes of preparation have been so long echoing in our ears. In the first place, we have once more presented to our notice the opposing hosts. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." On the one side are the beast and his armies. The beast has become a familiar symbol to us in our exposition of the Revelation. He was first introduced to our notice in chapter 13: 1-8, and he makes his appearance again and again, till the present vision, when he is finally destroyed. In chapter XVII this symbol of the beast with seven heads and ten horns is explained by the angel. In our previous lectures we made it sufficiently apparent that this symbol shadows forth the great anti-Christian power of Rome. We need not now repeat the steps by which we were led to this conclusion. But if the beast is the symbol of the anti-Christian power of Rome in the visions we have already considered, we may suppose that it is the symbol of the same power in the present vision. It therefore appears that in the conflict which is here described the anti-Christian power of Rome is to take a prominent part. On the side of this power many of the kings of the earth will take their places. We have seen, in the visions already considered, what an influence this power would have upon the kings of the earth. We have also seen, by a reference to history, that these visions have been fulfilled in this regard to the very letter. Rome has numbered the mightiest kings among her humblest servants. In this decisive battle, which is to determine the destiny of the world, and to decide the question whether Messiah or Antichrist will reign, many of the kings of the earth will arrange themselves on the side of that power they have been sustaining, and by which they have been upheld. Into this conflict these deluded kings will lead their armies; for Rome has been, and is yet, not only the mistress of kings, but also of their subjects. It is humiliating to every lover of his race to see how willingly men have been deceived by the pretensions of this ecclesiastical power, how ready they have been to receive the mark of the beast, and how cheerfully they have devoted their property, their service and their lives to the cause they have espoused. As followers of the Lamb we may well learn a lesson from our foes. On that day of

final conflict, a great army which no man can number, an army in which kings, and statesmen, and philosophers, and sages, and heroes, and warriors—men whose names are celebrated in the annals of the world's history—as well as those who are unknown, will fight on the side of the beast. These all will make common cause against the true religion. They will stake their all on the issue of the great conflict.

Now let us turn to the army by which they are opposed. These all will “gather together to make war against him that sits on the horse, and against his army.” We have so recently described the great conqueror and the hosts which follow him, riding on white horses, that this description must be fresh in our memory. The great conqueror is the Lord Jesus Christ, he who is revealed to us as the Captain of our salvation, who has led his people to so many victories, and who is to lead his people to the glorious end. His hosts are the holy angels, whose legions are always ready to draw their glittering swords in defense of their king, and all the ransomed from the earth, who though they are weak in themselves, are conquerors, and more than conquerors, through him that loved them.

These are the two parties in this conflict. On the one side the beast and his army; on the other side Jesus and his army. If we compare things which are yet unseen with things which have been witnessed on earth, it may be that we will be able to reach some proper conception of this sublime spectacle. Who has not felt his blood boil within him as he has read of the armies of earth, as they have encamped face to face on the eve of some decisive battle? And where, in all history, past, present or to come, have we such an army as is here presented to our imagination? Do we speak of generals? Here we have the beast and the Saviour. Do we speak of armies? Here we have armies the like of which have never marched on earth. Do we speak of the issues at stake? Here we have an issue without an equal and without a parallel, for the conflicting claims of Christ and Antichrist are now to be decided. Do we speak of battle fields? Here we have the battle field of Armageddon, beside which all other battle fields are but a play ground.

When we remember the character of the leaders and the composition of their armies, we may be sure on which side the victory will rest. But we are not left to conjecture. We are permitted to look on and see the issue. “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.” The leaders of the opposition are made prisoners of war. Of the leaders, two are here mentioned. The one is the beast, the undoubted symbol of the Papacy. The other is the false prophet. The false prophet was first mentioned in chapter 16: 13. The symbol was then explained as shadowing forth the Moham-

medan power, and I see no reason to change the opinion which was then expressed. The name applies to that power better than to any other that has ever appeared in the world. What is said with regard to the false prophet in the book of the Revelation agrees perfectly with the history of that power. It appears, from the words under consideration, that at the time referred to, the beast and the false prophet would be united in their opposition to Christ and his kingdom. Every one acquainted with the past knows that they have been thus united; every one who is acquainted with the present knows that they are thus united now; and we can easily believe that when the day of the great conflict comes, these life-long friends will stand and fall side by side.

The deceptions which these great systems practiced upon the children of men are here briefly described. They wrought miracles, not real miracles, which are ever the evidence of the divine power and the sign of the divine favor, but pretended miracles, "lying signs and wonders," as inspiration calls them. They deceived men not only by the miracles which they pretended to work, but also by their false teaching, their bold assertions, and their usurped power. But they did not deceive all men. If it had been possible, they would have deceived the very elect, but this was not possible; for those who are kept by the heavenly Father can never be plucked out of his hand. All those who had received the mark of the beast, that is, all those who yielded obedience to the rites and ceremonies by which the followers of the beast were distinguished from other men; and all those who worshiped his image, that is, all those who obeyed implicitly the decrees of the church of which the beast is the symbol; all these were deceived. But now these deceptions were at an end. The day so long waited for had come at last. The beast and the false prophet were taken. The systems of which they were the heads were overthrown. Their combination against Christianity was brought to an end. For it must be remembered that this is the figure under consideration. The whole representation is that of an alliance to prevent the spread of the true religion. It is as if Papacy and Mohammedanism united in one combined organization to overthrow the Messiah. But their organization, powerful though it was, was in vain. The leaders, as we have seen, were taken, but they were not to be put to death on the field of battle. They were reserved for a more fearful death than a sudden death by the sword. "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone." Of course this is to be understood figuratively and not literally. And though this figure may not reveal clearly the kind of punishment which is here shadowed forth, it does reveal the fact that this punishment will be terrible and overwhelming, for we cannot conceive of a death more horrible than that which is here shadowed forth. It also reveals the fact that their defeat will be utter and complete, for from that lake of fire there can be no hope of escape.



It must not be forgotten that in the last conflict here described, there is a third leader. In chapter XVI, in which we have a description of the hosts mustering for the battle of Armageddon, we are told that "three unclean spirits like frogs came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." In the words we have just considered, we have the fate of the beast and of the false prophet, but nothing is said of the fate of the dragon, the greatest of the three. If we wish to learn his fate we must turn to the opening verses of the next chapter, which should not have been separated from this chapter. There we find that the dragon suffered the same defeat, and was visited with the same punishment which befell the other two. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."

So far, then, as the three leaders in this combination are concerned, there can be no doubt. They are overthrown and cast into the lake of fire. But how is it with regard to their deceived followers? They, too, are overthrown, but they are punished with instant death on the battle field. "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." The idea is that their punishment, though terrible beyond comprehension, is far less terrible than that which befell their leaders; for every one would choose to die in the excitement of the battle rather than be reserved to be cast alive into a lake of fire. What a picture of carnage is here presented to our imaginations! The mighty word of the Messiah, like a sharp sword, cuts down all who oppose him. As on the night on which he was betrayed, the Roman soldiers fell as if dead when he spake, so on this great and terrible day, all will fall before the sword which proceedeth out of his mouth, and the fowls of heaven will gorge themselves with the feast to which they were invited by the angel of the sun.

This is the great and final conflict which is to usher in the morning of the millennium. When the sixth vial was poured out, we saw the hosts mustering for this conflict. These hosts are in three great divisions. The first is under the leadership of the dragon; the second is under the leadership of the beast; the third is under the leadership of the false prophet. These three divisions were explained to be Infidelity, Papacy and Mohammedanism. It was shown that there were indications in the signs of the times that these great enemies to Christianity were getting ready for the coming conflict, in which the fate of true religion was to be decided. This great conflict is called the battle of Armageddon, that is, the battle

of the hill or country of Megiddo, a little town on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon. But this does not mean that the battle was to be actually fought at Megiddo. Megiddo or its neighborhood was the scene of some of the most decisive battles in Jewish history. Therefore the phrase, "the battle of Megiddo," would be understood as meaning any decisive battle. The Greek might say of any decisive moral or political conflict, "It was a field of Marathon." The Englishman might say of such a conflict, "It was a field of Waterloo." A citizen of the United States might say of such a conflict, "It was a field of Gettysburg." Just so one familiar with Jewish history and geography might say of such a conflict, "It was a field of Megiddo." In either case, a man of ordinary intelligence would understand the meaning. We are, then, to understand the sixth vial as pointing to a moral conflict which is to be in the moral world what Marathon, Waterloo, Gettysburg and Megiddo have been in the political world.

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## LECTURE LIX.

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### THE BINDING OF SATAN.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.—REV. 20: 1-3.

THE great battle of Armageddon is now drawing to a close. The beast and the false prophet have been defeated and cast into a lake of burning brimstone. What becomes of the dragon, the greatest of the three, and of the spirit of infidelity which proceedeth out of his mouth? Did they escape the general overthrow? or were they involved in the common destruction? These questions are answered in the verses before us.

It must be confessed that this vision is not an easy one to explain. Perhaps no explanation is entirely free from difficulties. We will not attempt to mention the interpretations which have been suggested; we will give only the one which seems to be the best. While we may not hope that this one is entirely free from difficulties, yet it is accompanied with fewer difficulties than any other. Let it be remembered that the verses under consideration are a vision. They do not describe actual occurrences which shall take place on the earth; they describe certain symbols which shadow forth actual occurrences which shall take place on the earth. Remembering

this, let us try to get a clear idea of what John saw, and then perhaps we will be able to get a clear idea of the occurrences which these symbols were designed to shadow forth.

First of all, John saw an angel coming down out of heaven. Whether this was an angel who had taken part in the previous vision, we are not informed. It seems probable that it was a different angel, one who had not before appeared upon the scene. For we may well believe that those heavenly beings, who clustered around the Saviour so constantly during his earthly pilgrimage, and who have so much to do in ministering to the saints, will take a prominent part in these visions which uphold the future history of the church. This angel, whom the apostle saw, carried in his hand "the key of the bottomless pit," or abyss; that is, the under world, the prison house of the wicked dead. This nether world is often represented as a dark prison inclosed with walls, and accessible only by a massive door. This door is safely locked, so that none may pass in or out without permission. The key of this door, so we are told in the first chapter of this book, is in the hands of the Saviour himself; he has the keys of hades and of death. But on the present occasion, the Saviour had entrusted the key to the hand of the angel, who, as we will see in the sequel, was commissioned to open the door for the reception of another prisoner.

The angel also carried in his hand a "great chain." The prisoner whom he was to arrest was one of great power; and in order to secure his safe keeping, he must not only be under lock and key, he must also be bound with a chain; and not only with a chain, but also with a great chain.

We are not left in doubt as to the prisoner for whose arrest these preparations are made. "He laid hold on the dragon." This dragon is no new symbol in the Apocalypse. He has been brought to our notice again and again. He is one of the great enemies who are to fight, on the field of Armageddon, the great battle of the Lord God Almighty. Little need be said of the meaning of the names by which he is here called. He is called "the dragon," on account of the fearful form in which he appeared in these visions. He is called "the old serpent," in allusion to his first appearance on earth after the advent of our race, when in the form of a serpent he deceived our first parents. He is called "the devil," because he is the accuser and slanderer of the brethren. He is called "Satan," because he is the great adversary of all that is good. In regard to the enumeration of the names of this enemy of God, some one has said that it reads like a modern indictment, in which special care is taken to identify the criminal by a sufficient number of aliases. The angel from heaven, who has the keys of the prison of the wicked and the chain with which to bind the prisoner, arrests the dragon, alias the old serpent, alias the devil, alias Satan.

This prisoner is sentenced to imprisonment for a thousand years. It is

a long imprisonment; but after all it is only a part of the punishment which he deserves, and which he will receive. When the thousand years are ended, and the little season of temporary relief has passed, there will be an imprisonment which shall never end. There are but three ways in which the phrase, "a thousand years" can be understood. It may mean literally a thousand years, nothing more and nothing less; or it may be understood in the prophetic sense, in which one day stands for a year; it would then mean three hundred and sixty thousand years; or it may be understood in a figurative sense, as describing a long but indefinite period of time. It may be impossible to determine in which of these senses the phrase is used in the present connection. It does, however, seem unlikely that it should be used in the literal sense, when all the rest of the language of the vision must be understood in a figurative or prophetic sense. We are therefore inclined to the opinion that the period during which Satan is to be bound is not exactly a thousand literal years. We rather regard it as a long and indefinite period; for in this sense the phrase is used elsewhere in the Scriptures; as for example: "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years." "A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." But as we will have occasion to speak of this thousand years more particularly by and by, we hasten on to notice the other parts of the vision.

This angel who came down from heaven not only arrested the great adversary—he also "cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him," or rather upon it; for the reference is not to the prisoner, but to the door of the prison. It was a common thing in those ancient times, after the door of the prison was closed and locked, to place a seal upon it. This was done, not to fasten the door and make it secure, for it was already fastened and secured by the lock, but to prevent any unauthorised intrusion. When a seal was placed upon the door, the opening of the door would break the seal; and thus the fact that the door had been opened would be revealed. We have examples of this custom in the case of the seal placed upon the door of the den of lions into which Daniel was cast; and also in the seal which was placed upon the door of the sepulcher in which our Lord was buried. The abyss has been the place of Satan's confinement ever since he was cast out of heaven, but up to the present time he has not been kept in close confinement. God has, in sovereign wisdom, suffered him to have limited liberty. He visited the garden of Eden and tempted our first parents to their fall; he visited the children of Israel and led them into many a sin. He visited the Saviour during the forty days in the wilderness, and tried in vain to separate between the eternal Son and the eternal Sire. He visits the hearts and homes of men and endeavors with his cunning and experience to persuade them to fall down and worship him. As it was from the beginning so it is now, and so it will be

for years yet to come. Satan walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But at the time referred to in the words under consideration, he will be shut up in the abyss, a seal will be put upon the door, and he will be able to deceive the nations no more.

This imprisonment is not to be a final one; it is to last for a thousand years, whatever may be the period shadowed forth by this phrase. When the thousand years are ended there will be a little season of liberty, during which the great adversary will go forth once more and gather opposition to King Immanuel. This opposition will be short lived. Satan and his hosts will be defeated, Gog and Magog will be consumed with fire from heaven, and the devil that deceived the nations will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and will be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. But of this little season of liberty, of this final defeat, and of this unending punishment, we will have occasion to speak hereafter.

This, then, is the vision which occupies our attention at present. Let us get it clearly before our minds. A mighty angel appears with a key and a great chain in his hands. He arrests and binds the dragon, who is imprisoned for a thousand years in the prison house of the abyss, and during those thousand years the nations of the world have rest from his temptations. And now the questions present themselves for an answer: What were these symbols—for symbols they doubtless are—designed to shadow forth? What will be the condition of the world and the church when these things are fulfilled? To these questions we will now attempt an answer, in the hope that our attempt will not be entirely in vain.

I. With regard to **THE TIME** when the events shadowed forth are to take place, it may very safely be said, it is yet future. In that great moral conflict, which is called the battle of Armageddon, there are, as we have already seen, three foes of the Lord, who are in succession to be overthrown: first, Papacy, symbolized by the beast; then Mohammedanism, symbolized by the false prophet; after all this the dragon is to be overthrown. But Papacy and Mohammedanism have not yet filled up the measure of their earthly life. It is therefore evident that the events symbolized by the binding of Satan are yet in the future. How far they are in the future, it is impossible to determine. If our interpretation of previous visions is correct, and if we have been able rightly to understand the signs of the times, the termination of the power of the beast and the false prophet is not very remote. If this is so, we are living on the eve of a most momentous period of the world's history. When the anti-Christian system of Rome will come to a full end, and when the light of the crescent will go out for ever before the increasing light of the sun of righteousness, then we may look for the binding of Satan, the destruction of all the forms of infidelity, of which he is the head, and the beginning of that thousand years of peace and prosperity which will resemble the peace and prosperity of a sinless Eden.

II. With regard to THE DURATION of the period which is here shadowed forth, we can only say it will be a long period. It is said to be a thousand years. This is the period which in religious and ecclesiastical literature is called the millennium ; for the word millennium means simply a thousand years. And it is alone on this passage, and on the related passages in this chapter, that the doctrine of the millennium, properly so-called, rests. It is true that the Scriptures are filled with promises and predictions that the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will spread over all the world and cover all the lands ; but the notion of the millennium, viz., that this is to be in and for the space of a thousand years, is found in this passage alone. It may appear strange that a doctrine concerning which so much has been written, which has satisfied so many hearts, and which has inspired so many hopes, has no broader foundation than one passage of Scripture. But certainly one passage of inspiration, if its meaning can be clearly ascertained, is sufficient to establish any doctrine. Whatever doubt there may be about the passage under consideration, this much is plain : Satan is to be bound for a thousand years. But when it is asked how this expression, "a thousand years," is to be understood, literally, figuratively or prophetically, then we may well hesitate and confess our ignorance. As has been said, we are inclined to the opinion that it is to be understood figuratively ; that is, as describing a long but indefinite period of time. The reasons for this opinion are these : It does not seem likely that it would be used to describe a literal thousand years, for all the other expressions in the context are figurative, and we would naturally suppose that this would not differ from the others. Nor can we think that the expression is used in the prophetic sense, in which every day represents a year ; for then the period represented by the thousand years would be three hundred and sixty thousand years. Now, during the thousand years, the earth is to be the home of men, all war is to cease, all satanic influences are to be restrained. In these circumstances, we may suppose the human race will increase with far greater rapidity than at present. If so, it can be determined with mathematical certainty, that long before the three hundred and sixty thousand years are ended, the earth could not support or contain the inhabitants with which it would teem. It therefore seems evident that the phrase, "a thousand years," cannot be understood in a prophetic sense. If it is not understood in a literal or prophetic sense, it must be understood in a figurative sense ; that is, it must describe a long but indefinite period of time, which may be more or less than a thousand literal years. This theory agrees with those passages of Scripture which have already been quoted.

In order to get the duration of this period firmly fixed in our minds, let us suppose that it is to be a thousand literal years. To form some idea of the length of this period, we have only to suppose ourselves a thousand years back in the history of the world, say about the middle of the ninth

century. What progress has been made since then ! What changes have been wrought ! What improvements have been accomplished ! How much greater will be the progress, and the changes, and the improvements during the millennium ! The world, so to speak, will have a better start than it had at the middle of the ninth century. And during the millennium, the circumstances in favor of advancement will be more favorable than they have been in the past. Satan will be bound, and war, intemperance, and vice of every kind will be curbed. However great the progress the world has made in the past thousand years of its history, it will make even greater progress during the thousand years when Satan will be bound. Even if there are no special interpositions of divine providence, we must expect greater progress than ever before. With regard to the accelerated progress of human affairs, as the world grows older, permit an elegant and judicious extract from the writings of Hugh Miller, that prince of Christian geologists. "It has been remarked by some students of the Apocalypse, that the course of the predicted events at first move slowly, as, one after one, six of the seven seals are opened ; that, on the opening of the seventh seal, the progress is so considerably quickened that the seventh period proves as fertile in events, represented by the sounding of the seven trumpets, as the foregoing six taken together ; and that on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, so great is the further acceleration, that there is an amount of incident condensed in this seventh part of the second period, equal, as in the former case, to that of all the previous six parts in one. There are three cycles, it has been said, in the scheme, cycle within cycle ; the second comprised within a seventh portion of the first, and the third within a seventh portion of the second. Be this as it may, we may at least see something that resembles it in that actual economy of change and revolution manifested in English history for the last two centuries. It would seem as if events, in their downward course, had come under the influence of that law of gravitation through which falling bodies increase in speed as they descend, according to the squares of the distances." *First Impressions of England*, pp. 7, 8.

III. We must notice THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD during this millennial period. However, on this point we will not now speak at length, for it will be necessary to discuss it in future lectures. In order to understand the condition of the world during this period, we must remember what has been shadowed forth in the visions we have already considered. Popery, with all its errors in doctrine and immorality in practice, will be brought to an end. Mohammedanism, with all its superstition and its influence for evil, will be destroyed. In addition to all this, Satan will be bound. Of course this does not mean that he will be literally bound with a literal chain. It means that he will be restrained as to his influence and

power. Slavery, war, intemperance, lust, avarice, infidelity, and all else which occurs through the influence of Satan, will come to an end. However, let us not mistake. Though all satanic influence will be restrained, the world will not be sinless. There will be no change in the character of man as he comes into the world. There will still be the corrupt and ungodly passions of the human heart. The race has fallen, and though Satan will be restrained, this restraint will not cure our fallen nature. But though the world will not be sinless, there will be a great diminution in sin. While all the sins which spring from our inborn corruption will remain, all those sins which spring directly from the influence of Satan will be removed. If we remember this, it will not appear so strange that Satan, at the close of the thousand years will be able, for a little season, to exercise something of his former power in deceiving the nations.

When satanic influence is thus restrained, what will be the state of things in this world of ours? For an answer to this question, we must go back to what the prophets have spoken with reference to it, for it is this period, with its glories and its joys, which has stirred the prophets of the Old Testament to speak in the most eloquent strains. Gathering up in a few sentences what they have told us, we know that during this long and indefinite period, which we call the millennium, there will be a great increase of population. When war, intemperance, lust, and all the various passions which shorten human life are restrained, it is easy to see that there will be a rapid growth in the numbers of the human race. There will be advancement in knowledge and in all that adds to the welfare of men. The resources of nature are not yet exhausted. Though many mines have been opened, there are others yet to be discovered. Though the art of printing, and the use of steam, and some of the secrets of magnetism have been brought to light, there are richer treasures in nature and in science than any which have been delivered up; and they will be delivered up for human comfort and happiness in those days of which we speak. There will be cessation from the bloody conflicts which have stained the plains of earth with gore, for men will learn war no more, and the sword will be beaten into the plow-share, and the spear into the pruning-hook. There will be a general prevalence of true religion. The Jews will be brought in, together with the fullness of the Gentile nations. While we are not to suppose that the whole world will be entirely brought under the power of the gospel, and that every individual of the human race will be a true follower of the Lamb, we may suppose that the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and that the church of Christ will be what it has not been, the predominant power in the world.

This we believe to be what is shadowed forth by this vision of the binding of Satan. After Poperly and Mohammedanism are destroyed, Satan will be limited and restrained in his influence. Then, during that long and



indefinite period, which is here said to continue for a thousand years, and which we are accustomed to call the millennium, the earth will enter upon a new phase of its existence. Peace, righteousness and true religion will prevail. All those reforms which now agitate the church and the world, and which bring together some of the ablest minds and draw out some of the most profound thought of the day, will be accomplished. Then will be brought to pass the saying that is written, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."

## LECTURE LX.

### THE MILLENNIUM.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.—REV. 20: 4, 5.

WHAT is to be the condition of the world during the millennium, when Satan is bound and restrained in his power and influence? This question is answered in the subject of the present lecture. It must be confessed that this passage is not very clear. The whole book is made up of symbols, but of all the symbols in the Apocalypse, none are more difficult to understand than the ones before us. It becomes every expositor not to express his opinion with too much confidence.

It will perhaps assist in giving clearness to our exposition, if we sketch briefly the two main theories of interpretation. It is not meant that there are *only* two methods of interpreting this chapter; that there are *only* two theories of the millennium. There are many theories, but they are all modifications of two main theories. The first is called the pre-millennial theory; that is, the theory that the second coming of Christ is to take place at the beginning of the thousand years. The other is called the post-millennial theory; that is, the theory that the second coming of Christ is not to take place till after the thousand years are ended. These two theories have lived side by side in the Christian church almost from the beginning. Their advocates are pretty equally divided in number and in influence. If men of great learning and piety have advocated one theory, men of no less learning and piety have advocated the other. In every church opinion is divided. It would be difficult to say which side has the greater weight of authority.

Those who maintain the first, the pre-millennial theory, are called pre-millennarians, or millenarians, or ohiliasts, or literalists, or adventists, according to the way in which they modify or explain the general theory; but they all believe that after Popery and Mohammedanism are overthrown, and after Satan is bound, Christ will come, and that the coming of Christ will mark the beginning of the thousand years of the millennium. The main points on which the advocates of this theory agree are these:

1. They believe that at the period here referred to, Christ will descend from heaven in the clouds, and that he will reign personally on the earth.
2. They believe that he will have some central place of authority and power, which will be the earthly capital of his world-wide dominion, and that this capital will probably be the city of Jerusalem.
3. The most of them believe that this coming of Christ will be signalized by the conversion of the Jews, and by their return to the land of their fathers.
4. They believe that immediately on the coming of Christ all the righteous dead will be raised in their immortal bodies, a resurrection which is called the first resurrection, and that these saints will be partakers with the Saviour in the government of the world.
5. They believe that this will continue for the period of a thousand literal years.
6. They believe that during this period the world will be converted, not, however, by the gospel, but by a new dispensation of the power of the Son of God.
7. They believe that at the close of this thousand years the rest of the dead will be raised, the judgment will take place, and the affairs of this world will be brought to their final consummation.

The other theory is widely different. Let us try to get it also firmly fixed in our minds:

1. Those who advocate the post-millennial theory believe that after Popery and Mohammedanism are overthrown, and after Satan has been bound and restrained in his influence for evil, true religion will generally prevail, and the gospel be preached throughout the world; that while the world will not absolutely and entirely be brought under the power of the gospel, and every individual of our race be a true follower of the Lamb, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, and the church will be the dominant power in the world; and that slavery, war, lust, avarice, intemperance, infidelity and all kindred evils will cease.
2. They believe that this will continue for a long and indefinite period of time, which may be more or less than a thousand literal years.
3. They believe that after the thousand years are ended, the Saviour will come in the clouds of heaven.
4. They believe that then all the dead, small and great, the righteous and the wicked, will be raised from the sleep of death and appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
5. They believe that this will be the consummation of the affairs of this world, that the righteous will then enter upon the joys of the heavenly state, and that the wicked will be driven away to their unending punishment.

This post-millennial theory we believe to be the correct one. It may be that there are difficulties connected with it ; it may be that some passages of Scripture are hard to explain on this theory ; yet there are fewer objections to it than to the other. The passage before us is the principal one which is relied on by those who advocate the doctrine of the personal reign of Christ for a thousand literal years. Let us, then, try to determine what it teaches. Let us see whether it teaches that the coming of Christ will be before or after the thousand years. Let us discover whether it is in harmony with the pre-millennial theory or with the post-millennial theory.

First of all, you will observe that nothing whatever is said of the coming of Christ at the beginning of this millennial period. It is not till after the thousand years are ended, and after Satan's brief release from the prison of the abyss, that we are told of the advent of the Great Judge upon the scene. Then John saw "a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away." You will also observe that nothing whatever is here said of the personal reign of Christ upon the earth with Jerusalem as his capital. You will observe still further, that while the beginning of the thousand years is to be signalized by the living again of the souls of the martyrs, yet the resurrection of the dead is expressly declared to take place at a later period. When the thousand years are ended and the Judge has come, then "the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." Surely this does not look as if there was to be a literal reign of Christ with the saints for a thousand years on the earth. And if the passage under consideration is the main passage by which the literal reign of Christ is supported, this doctrine does not seem to have a very stable foundation.

These general remarks will prepare the way for the particular exposition upon which we now enter. We will take up the clauses and symbols, one by one, and endeavor to determine their meaning. If we are not mistaken, we will discover that these clauses and symbols harmonize with the post-millennial theory, whose main features may be thus stated: true religion, no longer hindered by Satan, who will be imprisoned in the abyss, will spread over the whole world and be the dominant power in the world for a long and indefinite period ; at the close of this period, the Saviour will come, according to his promise, in the clouds of heaven ; then the dead will be raised and the final judgment take place.

After Satan was bound and cast into the dark prison of the abyss, there to remain in close confinement till the time of his temporary release, John saw "thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." In these words, three different but connected symbols are mentioned, viz., thrones, persons sitting on the thrones, and judgment given

unto them. The first of these symbols is easily understood. A throne is a symbol of power and honor. It therefore appears that during the millennium there are to be those who will receive power and honor; and there are to be many such, for the apostle saw "thrones."

But when we come to speak of the second symbol, viz., the persons who sat on these thrones of power and honor, we are met with difficulty. John does not tell us who these persons were. In order to discover who they were, we must compare Scripture with Scripture: Are there any persons who are described in the word of God as sitting on thrones in the hereafter? Listen to the words of the Saviour: "When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Listen to the words of Paul: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world"? Listen to the words of Peter, who describes the saints as "a royal priesthood." Listen to the words of John in the opening of the Apocalypse: "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever." From these passages, and from many others which might be quoted, it is manifest that it is the saints who in the glorious future are to sit on the thrones of power and honor. When the second symbol is thus explained, the third one is easily understood. The saints are not only to sit in the place of kings, they are to be kings. Judgment, that is, the administration of justice, is to be committed to them.

If these symbols have been rightly explained, what do they lead us to expect? That during the millennium, the saints who are alive on the earth will occupy places of honor and power. Thus far, in the history of the world, it has been different. The saints have been among the lowly. Not many great, not many noble, not many princes have been called. The godly have been found, not on thrones and in palaces, but in poverty and in persecution. But during the thousand years, all this will be changed. Then there will be thrones, as there have always been, but on these thrones the saints will sit and administer justice in the earth. Imagination fairly staggers as it attempts to picture this condition of things, and compares it with the present. Ungodly men will no longer bear rule. Trickery, bribery and corruption will no longer open the way to political preferment. True religion will be found in kings' palaces, and will leaven the whole state. The higher law will be recognized in houses of Congress. Rulers will be men who fear God and hate evil. All this will be when the thrones of power and honor are filled with the saints of God. And according to the words of this prophecy, these thrones will be filled with the saints of God during the millennial period of which we speak. This, then, is to mark the beginning of the figurative thousand years. When Satan is bound and satanic influence is restrained, when Christians are

exalted to bear rule on earth, and when Christians who are exalted to bear rule will carry their Christianity with them into their official actions, we may know that the millennium is beginning to dawn.

But in this vision John saw something more startling than thrones and they that sat upon them, and something much harder to be explained. "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark on their foreheads or in their hands." This is an important clause, and on its interpretation depends, in no small measure, the interpretation of the whole vision. It is largely on this clause that the pre-millenarians found that doctrine of their theory, which asserts that the bodies of the saints are raised at the beginning of the millennium, to reign literally with Christ for a thousand years. But you will observe that not all the saints are spoken of; only the martyrs. Nor is it said that the martyrs will be raised from the dead; only that they will live and reign with Christ. Nor is anything said of the bodies of the martyrs; John expressly says that he saw their souls. Surely, then, there is nothing in this clause which points to a literal resurrection. If the doctrine of the literal resurrection of the saints at the beginning of the millennium has no firmer foundation than is to be found in this clause, there is little on which it can be based. In order to reach the true meaning of the clause, we must first determine who are the persons here referred to. They are described as those who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God"; that is, they are those who were put to death as witnesses for Jesus, and on account of their adherence to the teachings of the word of God. In other words, they are Christian martyrs. In the next place, they are described as those who had not worshiped the beast, neither his image; that is, they were those who had remained faithful to Christ and his cause, in spite of all the allurements of Papacy, and who had refused to worship the anti-Christian power of Rome notwithstanding all the persecutions which were brought upon them. These were the persons whose souls John saw in his vision. If he had said he saw their bodies, we would at once suppose that they had been raised from the dead, and that they were again alive on the earth; but he distinctly tells us that he saw their souls. What does this mean? Without any circumlocution, the meaning seems to be this: those who are alive on the earth during the millennium will be men like the faithful martyrs of the past. They will be as faithful to Christ, as firm in their adherence to the word of God, and as holy in life, as those who once sealed their testimony with their blood. The spirit of the martyrs will be the spirit of those who then dwell on the earth. It will be as if the martyrs had come to life again, and had taken possession of the world. As John in vision looked upon the world in its millennial period, he saw that it was filled

with the very counterpart of the martyrs : that is, men who in spirit, and in faith, and in life were like the martyrs.

He saw, moreover, that these martyr-like spirits lived and reigned with Christ ; that is, they were exalted to share the honors and triumphs of their glorious King. They entered upon a new and higher life ; the principles they held were universally acknowledged ; and they were honored as if they reigned with Christ.

This is, we believe, the meaning of the vision in which John saw the souls of the martyrs living again on the earth. There is to be a resurrection, a revival of the old martyr spirit. Men like the ancient martyrs are to live and sit upon the thrones of earth. This interpretation of the word "live" is sustained by other portions of Scripture. Thus Ezekiel says, speaking of the restoration of the Jews, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and ye shall live." Thus Hosea says, speaking of a similar revival, "After two days he will revive us, and we shall live in his sight." Thus in the parable of the prodigal son, it is said, "Thy brother was dead and is alive again." Thus in this book it is said of the reviving of the two witnesses, "After three days and a half the spirit of life entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." This interpretation of the word "live," is also sustained by the common use of language. John Huss, one of the earlier martyrs of the faith, speaking of himself, of his death, and of the future triumph of the principles he preached, made use of this striking language : "But I, awaking from the dead, and arising, so to speak, from my grave, shall live with great joy." In a similar strain one of the popes speaks : "The heretics Huss and Jerome, are now alive again in the person of Martin Luther." But enough has been said on this point. Internal evidence, other passages of Scripture, and the common use of language lead us to the conclusion that this verse was designed to teach us that during the millennial period of the world's history, men like the martyrs would again live on the earth and be exalted to places of honor and power as if they reigned with Christ.

Does the rest of the vision harmonize with this conclusion ? We are told that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." It is obvious that "the rest of the dead" are contrasted with the martyrs referred to in the previous verse. Therefore, the rest of the dead would be the wicked, those who had not been faithful to Christ and to the word of God. And if the living again of the martyrs shadowed forth the fact that saintly men were to live on the earth during the millennium, then the assertion that the rest of the dead would not live till the end of the thousand years, would shadow forth the fact that wicked men were not to live on the earth during the millennium. In other words, the inhabitants of the earth during that period would be men like the

ancient Christian martyrs, and not like the rest of the dead. When the thousand years are ended, and Satan is set free from his imprisonment, wickedness and wicked men would again appear on the earth for a little season. It is, however, worthy of remark, that in the Sinaitic manuscript, that most ancient manuscript of this book, and in some of the oldest versions, the clause we are now considering does not appear; and while it does appear in some of the manuscripts and versions, the readings vary. Some of the best critics have rejected this clause as forming no part of the inspired Scriptures. If it is a part of the inspired Scriptures, its explanation is that which has been given.

The words, "this is the first resurrection," refer not to the living again of the rest of the dead, but to the living again of the martyrs. This revival of Christianity on the earth during the millennial period may well be called a resurrection. By nature men are dead in trespasses and sins, and when they are brought out of this state of spiritual death it is a resurrection. It may well be called the first resurrection, to distinguish it from the general resurrection which is to take place on the morning of the day of judgment, when all the dead, small and great, are to be brought from their graves to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. These two resurrections are described and contrasted in many places in the Scriptures. In John 5: 25, the Saviour says, speaking of the first, the spiritual resurrection, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." In the same connection, speaking of the second, the literal resurrection, the Saviour says, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Of a similar import is the language which the Saviour addressed to the mourning Martha. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Surely, then, it is in accordance with Scripture usage to understand the words, "the first resurrection," as describing that wonderful spiritual revival which is to take place at the beginning of the millennium, when the inhabitants of the earth, through divine grace, will resemble the faithful martyrs of the olden time, and not their fellow men who rejected the Saviour and persecuted the saints.

## LECTURE LXI.

## THE LOOSING OF SATAN.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.—REV. 20 : 6-10.

WE are in the midst of the inspired description of the millennial period of the world's history. As John thought that the time was coming when this description would become an actual fact, it is no wonder that he should cry out in holy joy, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." The meaning of the first resurrection was explained in the last lecture. It is that wonderful revival of true religion which will be during the millennium, when men will be brought out of their state of spiritual death into newness of life. Those who live during that period and are permitted to have part in that spiritual resurrection may well be pronounced blessed ; their condition may well be regarded as happy and favored. Many who have lived on the earth may be called blessed. Those were blessed who stood around smoking Sinai, with the marvelous events of Egypt and the Red sea yet fresh in their memory, and saw the mighty manifestations of the power and presence of their God. They were blessed who lived in Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon, who were a part of the ancient church during the days of its greatest prosperity, and who were worshipers in the ancient temple while it was in a peculiar sense the earthly dwelling place of the heavenly Father. They were blessed who lived on the earth during the days of the incarnation, who stood at the feet of the man of Nazareth, saw his miracles, and heard his words. But they will be especially blessed, blessed beyond men of any previous generation, who will live on earth during that period when Satan will be bound, when the saints will bear rule, when the inhabitants of the earth will be men like the ancient martyrs, and when the church will be the dominant power in the world.

Those who live then will not only be blessed, they will also be "holy"; for as it was in the beginning, as it is now, so will it be to the end; blessedness and holiness are inseparably connected. One great characteristic of the millennium will be holiness. Holy systems will then triumph ; holy



principles will then prevail; holy lives will then be the rule and not the exception. Wicked men now occupy prominent place, but "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

We are not left in doubt as to the reason of this blessedness. Three reasons are assigned, either of which is sufficient to fill the immortal soul with the serenity of holy joy. In the first place, on such as have part in the first resurrection, "the second death hath no power." The second death, what is it? We know what the first death is; at least we know something of the signs of its approach, its agony and its results. We have stood too often beside the dying and the dead, we have looked too often into the open grave waiting to hide our kindred from our sight, to need any answer to the question, what is the first death? But what is the second death? It is a death which is spoken of under this name only in the Revelation. In chapter 2:11, the promise to him that overcometh is, "He shall not be hurt of the second death." In chapter 20:14, it is said, as marking the final consummation of all things earthly, "Death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." With still greater plainness it is said, chapter 21:8, when describing the eternal destiny of the ungodly, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." In the light of these passages, we can have no difficulty in answering the question, what is the second death? It is the everlasting punishment of the wicked. That man on whom the second death has no power, who knows that the second death has no power over him, and who stands in no fear of eternal punishment, may well be counted blessed. This will be the happy condition of those who live during the millennial period. The second reason of their happiness is this: "They shall be priests of God and of Christ." To be a priest of God is to be directly engaged in his service and worship. This will be the condition of those who are permitted to enjoy the blessedness of the millennial period. This worship and service of God must fill the holy soul with happiness. The third reason of their happiness is this: "They shall reign with him a thousand years." Of the honor and authority which this expression describes, and of the period during which it is to last, we have already spoken; and what has been said need not now be repeated. Since these things are so, the apostle may well say, and in this saying he sums up the happiness of the millennium, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

And now, we might think that all things were in readiness for the coming of the Son of man. Such a state of things as we have described as existing on the earth would easily merge into the glory of heaven. Indeed

the prophets of the Old Testament speak as if there was to be no interval between the millennium and the heavenly state; but it appears, from the subject of the present lecture, that there is to be an interval in which Satan is to be loosed, and other wonderful events are to take place. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." Why the prophets did not speak of this interval and its wonderful events, we do not know; but to them, on account of the long distance over which their vision had to reach, events that were widely separated may have seemed close together. To a traveler, the mountains on the distant horizon, rising one above the other, seem so near that a stone might be tossed from one to another, but when at last he stands upon the summit of the first range, he discovers that there are wide valleys and extended plains to cross before he can reach the summit of the next range. So it may have seemed to the prophets who lived in the long ago, that the events of which they speak were neighbors in point of time, but as we draw near those predicted events, we find that there are chasms and intervals, of which those who lived at a more remote period never dreamed. Between the millennium and the heavenly glory there is to be an interval of which the prophets did not write, and of which we would not have known, if it had not been for the passage before us. How long this interval is to continue, we do not know. However, as it appears from verse 3, it is to be only for "a little season." It is to be a little season, when compared with the unending stretch of uninterrupted happiness which will be beyond it. It is to be a little season, when compared with the millennial period of the thousand figurative years which will precede it. But when we have said this, we have expressed the full measure of our knowledge, for the only hint of the duration of this interval is in these words: "After that he must be loosed a little season."

The great event which is to distinguish this interval is the loosing of Satan. For a thousand years he will be kept in the close confinement of the prison of the abyss. He will be restrained in his power and influence. The various forms of evils which come through his direct temptations will be held in check. But after the thousand years have expired, after the world has enjoyed a long period of rest from his assaults, he will be let loose. His power and influence will again be felt. Infidelity will again make headway on the earth. What particular form his opposition to Christ and his kingdom will take, we do not know. It will not be the form of Mohammedanism, for that will be destroyed; it will not be the form of Romanism, for that will be destroyed; perhaps it will be some new form of infidelity to which the world is as yet a stranger. But whatever form his opposition takes, it will be so extensive and powerful, that nothing but the direct interposition of the power of God will be able to deliver the church from the impending danger. If it should be asked, why will God

permit the world, which has for a thousand years enjoyed the blessedness of the millennium, to be exposed again to satanic influence? we can only say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." But if we might be permitted to offer a conjecture, it will be to show the world once more the power of its enemy and the still greater power of its God. For a thousand years Satan will be almost forgotten. His name will no longer be upon the tongues of men. The memory of his influence will fade away from the human mind. Men will almost forget that such a being as Satan exists. To remind them of the power of this enemy, and of the love of God who delivered them from this enemy, Satan is, in infinite wisdom, loosed out of his prison for a little season.

The next thing which is brought to our attention in this vision is the condition of the world during the period of Satan's temporary release. "He shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." For a time Satan is to act in his true character and to deceive the nations. In what way he is to do this, we are not informed, but we may suppose that under his influence there will be revived opposition to Christianity, that spiritual declension and infidelity will prevail, and possibly that some new form of false religion will spread over the earth. This new and temporary outbreak of wickedness, whatever form it may assume, will be wide-spread. It will extend over the whole earth. In ancient times, and sometimes even yet, the earth is spoken of as a great plain, divided into four parts or quarters: the North, South, East and West. Therefore it is implied, in the language under consideration, that the deception of Satan will not be confined to one particular location; it will reach out towards the North and South, and East and West, till it operates in all the four corners of the earth.

This new attack of Satan on the church is described under the figure of an invasion. Such a figure every Jew would understand, for the land of their fathers had often been invaded, and of such invasions their prophets had often spoken. The imagery of this spiritual invasion is taken from an actual invasion which was predicted by Ezekiel 38: 1-23. In that chapter Magog is the name of a people, and Gog is the name of its king. It is not necessary to enter into any explanation of this prophecy of Ezekiel, and to show how and when it was fulfilled. It will be sufficient to say, that expositors are generally agreed that Gog and Magog describe a nation of northern barbarians, whose home was beyond the Caucasian range of mountains, and who, on more than one occasion, overran and devastated the fertile plains of the south. Josephus supposes that the Scythians are the nation referred to under the name of Gog and Magog, and his supposition is almost universally regarded as correct. In the passage before us, the apostle John borrows the imagery which Ezekiel uses, to describe the

final assault of Satan upon the church. As Gog and the assembled hosts of Magog came against Palestine and Jerusalem, so Satan and his assembled hosts would come against the church in the latter days. This great enemy of the Saviour and his kingdom would go through the four corners of the earth and gather his forces for the spiritual battle. And he would be wonderfully successful, for the number of his followers would be as the sand of the sea, an expression so often used in Scripture and in common conversation to describe a great multitude, that we have almost ceased to regard it as a figure of speech.

The onward march of this invading army is set before us in few but graphic words. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." If we keep in mind the figure as already explained, these words will be easily understood. The church is described as the city of Jerusalem, which is here called "the beloved city," and the members of that church are described as saintly warriors who are encamped around the city to defend it from every foe. Against this city and its faithful defenders, the hosts of Gog and Magog are marching. So numerous are they that they seem to spread over all the land and to encompass the city and the camp on every side. Permit me to say again that this description is not to be understood literally. We are not to suppose that a literal war or a literal siege of Jerusalem is here described. This chapter is made up of symbols, and the verse under consideration must be regarded as symbolical like the rest. The same principles of interpretation must be applied to all parts of the chapter and to all parts of the book. If so, the meaning obviously is that the church is to be attacked with enemies on every side, who will be under the leadership of Satan, and who will come up against the church as Gog and Magog came up against Jerusalem in the olden time.

The danger to which the church is exposed is very great. There seems to be no earthly hope of escape; but strange to say, the saints do not, on this occasion, have to strike a single blow on their own behalf. All they have to do is to stand still and see the salvation of their God. "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Spiritual Gog and Magog will be destroyed as if fire came down from heaven as it did on Sodom and Gomorrah. Their destruction will be sudden, certain and complete. What means will be employed to accomplish this destruction is not revealed; time alone can disclose them. It is sufficient for us to know that when the day here referred to shall come, the divine power will somehow be exerted for the triumph of the church and the overthrow of the church's enemies.

And then Satan, who has had from the beginning so much to do in human affairs, will be consigned to the prison house of the abyss without

hope of release. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." We are told, chapter 19: 20, that after the battle of Armageddon the beast and the false prophet are to be cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone. So now after the battle of Gog and Magog, Satan, the greatest of the three foes of the church, will be consigned to the same punishment. As the beast and the false prophet and Satan were one in their opposition to Christ, so they will be one in their suffering. The same lake of fire and brimstone will be their eternal home. Their punishment will be sore, for God is just. To give us some idea of its severity, it is said to be a "lake of fire and brimstone." To give us a still greater idea of its severity, it is said to be "day and night for ever and ever." This description is beyond our power to conceive. We can conceive, in some measure, the agony of a human body circled and blistered with raging flames, when that agony is borne for a few moments and then is relieved by the unconsciousness of death; but the agony that knows no relief, day or night, till the remotest end of eternity, is too high for us to understand. When the words of this prophecy are fulfilled, all the enemies of the church will be destroyed; there will be no more combinations against the kingdom of Christ; the gospel will triumph, and everything will be prepared for the coming of the Saviour and the final consummation.

## LECTURE LXII.

### THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.—REV. 20: 11-15.

WHILE it is true that the history of our world has for the most part run an even course, yet every now and then there have been events of sublimity and terror. When God spake and it was done, when he commanded and it stood fast, when the world and all that it contains, with man

as the lord of all, were called into being by the word of the Creator, it was sublime. When the waters of the deluge swept over valley, plain and mountain, when the whole world seemed to be an ocean without a shore, when the fiery rain from heaven burned up the cities of the plain and their sinful inhabitants, there were days of terror. When Jesus bowed his head on the cross and gave up the ghost, when the sepulcher of his burial was opened and he came forth, when with hands outstretched in the attitude of kindly benediction he ascended to heaven from the summit of Olivet, it was sublime far above our ability to conceive. But there is an event yet future, which in sublimity and terror is to eclipse anything the world has yet known. That event is the final judgment, when all men, small and great, are to stand before the bar of God and be judged according to the deeds done in the body. With this event we are now, in our exposition, brought face to face. All things are in readiness for the final judgment. To help in giving clearness to the thoughts which will be presented, we will notice in their order the following points: the time of the judgment; the person of the judge; the multitudes who are to be judged; the manner of the judgment; the destruction of death and hades, and the punishment of the wicked.

I. The first point to be noticed is **THE TIME OF THE JUDGMENT**. When are the events described in the verses before us to take place? This is a question to which only a relative answer can be given. No one can say just how many years and days will elapse before the thrones will be set and the books will be opened. The word of God has purposely concealed this knowledge. "Of this day and hour knoweth no man, but only the Father in heaven." All predictions, therefore, which would fix the exact time for the day of judgment, and they have been many, are in vain. But though we may not fix the exact time, we may, if our interpretation of the previous visions is correct, fix the order of events. Romanism and Mohammedanism must first be destroyed; then the millennium, with its binding of Satan and its prevalence of happiness and holiness, must come and continue for a long and indefinite period of time, which may be more or less than a thousand literal years; then Satan must be loosed for a little season, make his final attack upon the New Testament church, as Gog gathered the hosts of Magog against the Old Testament church, and be defeated and imprisoned for ever; and then the next great event in the history of the world will be the coming of Christ for judgment. It is evident, therefore, that many things remain to be done before the dead, small and great, shall stand before God. Let it not be said that this doctrine leads to carelessness of life. As the day of death will be to every individual in effect the same as the day of judgment, and as the day of death may come at any moment,

every man should live as watchfully and as prayerfully as if he might at any hour hear the trumpet of the angel. Though we may not be able to say just how many years will pass away before the day of judgment will dawn, yet we know that it will dawn, that no one living or dead will be able to hide himself in that dread hour, and that the day of judgment is the vestibule through which we must all pass to enter either the happiness of heaven or the misery of the lost, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Instead of disturbing ourselves with vain speculations as to the time of the day of judgment, let us plant ourselves upon the certainty of its coming, let us be diligent in every Christian duty, let us gird up the loins of our minds, and let us be always ready, for in such an hour as we think not the Son of man will come, if not in judgment, at least in death.

II. The next point to be noticed is **THE PERSON OF THE JUDGE** as he is set before us in the words, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away." The scene which is here described is that which will occur at the Saviour's second advent. With the Saviour's first advent, that is, his coming in human form to save his people from their sins, we are familiar. Of this coming the prophets and the evangelists wrote. We know how he was born, how he lived, and how he died. This same Saviour is to come again the second time. Though we may not be as familiar with his second coming as we are with his first, we should be, for the Scriptures are full of it. Job spake of it when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." The Psalmist spake of it when he said, "He cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with truth." The Saviour, during the time of his first advent, spake of it again and again. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works." "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "The Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." "I will come again and receive you to myself." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." The holy angels spake of it when they said to the sorrowing disciples on Olivet, "This same Jesus, who is taken from you unto heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The apostles spake of it when they used such language as this: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night." "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not

God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." The glorified Redeemer speaks of this coming when he says, in the closing words of inspiration, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." Gathering up the truth taught in these passages, and many parallel passages which might be quoted, we may know that the second advent of Christ will be at the end of the world, just before the judgment; that it will be glorious beyond comparison; that it will be accompanied by a mighty army of the angels; that it will be sudden, like the coming of a thief in the night; that it will be startling, for all men shall see it from one end of the world to the other; that it will be from heaven; that it will be in a chariot of clouds, and that in many respects it will be similar to his ascension from the summit of Olivet.

These truths, or at least some of them, are plainly brought out in the verse under consideration: The Son of man, when he comes, will sit on a great white throne which elsewhere is called the "throne of his glory." It is a great throne—that is, high and elevated; it is a white throne—that is, shining and splendid. It is a throne in every way worthy of the glorious person who sits upon it; for he that sat upon it was glorious. The apostle does not attempt to describe the glory of the Son of man, but he gives us some idea of that glory by describing the effect which it seemed to have upon creation. Just as the morning stars seem to fade away before the rising of the sun, so the heavens and the earth seemed to fade away before the coming of Christ. The splendor of his appearance was so great that everything else was eclipsed by its brightness. Those who were looking on could see nothing but the throne and him that sat upon it. This, then, is the Judge, and this the glory of his appearing. The Judge is the Lord Jesus, for "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." The glory of his second appearing is far greater than that which attended his first appearing, for he "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

III. THE PERSONS TO BE JUDGED are described in these words: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell," that is, the grave, "delivered up the dead which were in them." All the dead, small and great, will on that day stand before the throne of God. None of earth's mightiest kings will be so great as to be excused; none of earth's poorest beggars will be so poor as to be forgotten. The expression, "small and great," like the similar expressions, old and young, rich and poor, bond and free, has a universal meaning which includes the whole race. Here we have incidental proof that the exposition of the resurrection spoken of in verse 4 is correct.



That resurrection cannot describe the literal resurrection of the martyrs, for the martyrs must be included in the "small and great" who are to be raised at the time of the second coming of the Son of man. Therefore, the resurrection of the martyrs must be a figurative resurrection.

To this gathering before the throne of God, the dead will come from all the places in which they have been sleeping. The sea will give up its dead. Those who were drowned in the deluge; the hosts of Egypt that were overwhelmed in the pursuit of Israel; those who have gone down in the many naval combats which have tinged the seas with blood; the gallant sailors who have been swallowed up in countless shipwrecks; those who have died far from home and from country, and have been buried in watery graves, will come up from their deep burial to appear at the judgment. Those who have found burial in all lands, as well as those who have found burial in all seas, will come forth, for death and the grave, as well as the sea, are to give up their dead; the pyramids of Egypt will be overthrown, and the long line of Pharaohs will come forth; the stones will be rolled away from the doors of all the sepulchers of Palestine, and patriarch, and prophet, and priest, and king, and the thousands over whom they ruled, will appear; the catacombs of Rome will be opened to the day, and the idol worshiper and the Christian martyr will stand side by side; the cemeteries of Christendom will be crowded with the throng of those who have been laid, one by one, with many tears, in the house appointed for all the living; those who have been buried in unknown graves on the battle field, or in the snows of the north, or in the barren plains of the south, will not be overlooked; kings and their subjects, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, saints and sinners, all will hear the resurrection trumpet, and will march with angel music to the skies. And we will be there. No matter where we may be buried; no matter how many summers the grass may have grown green over our heads; no matter how long our names may have been forgotten among men, we will be there; for all the dead, small and great, are to stand before God.

But the living: what of them? For there will be those who will be alive on the earth at the coming of Christ. In the present passage nothing is said of them and of the part they are to take in the proceedings of that day. But we are not left in ignorance, for the apostle Paul is full and clear on this point. "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." What a gathering this will be! Then for the first time will all the families of the earth be united. Then will all the human race, from Adam to his youngest son, be in one congregation. Then, most solemn thought of all, we will appear before the throne to be judged. These are the persons to be judged: all

the dead and all the living; for we must all, without exception and without favor, appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

IV. THE MANNER OF THE JUDGMENT is thus described: "The books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." "They were judged, every man according to their works." The imagery here is taken in part from a court of justice. The judge sits upon the throne; all the children of Adam's fallen race appear for trial; all that they have done, or thought, or said, has been recorded by the unerring pen of Omniscience; these books of record are now opened, and men are judged according to the things which are written in them. These books are many. There is the book of memory; there is the book of conscience; there is the book of divine law; there is the book of God's remembrance; and best of all, there is the book here called "the book of life," and in another place, "the Lamb's book of life," in which are written the names of those who are the children of God and the heirs of the Saviour's kingdom. Those whose names are written in this book have nothing to fear. It may be that the books here spoken of are not only the books in which are recorded the deeds of men's lives, but also the books in which are recorded the laws by which men are to be judged; for all will not be judged by the same law. We are told, on the highest authority, that those who have sinned without law will be judged without law, and that those who have sinned by the law will be judged by the law. The heathen who had only the law of nature, and not the law of revelation, will be judged by the law of nature, and will be condemned by that law, "because when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." The Jews who had the law of the Old Testament, and not the law of the New, will be judged by that law and will be condemned by that law, if they have rejected the Messiah whom that law reveals. Christians who have the completed gospel will be judged by that law and condemned by that law, if they have not believed on the name of the Son of God. It is a plainly revealed principle of the divine government, that responsibility is in proportion to privilege. "From those to whom much is given much will be required." It is this principle which gives emphasis to the declaration of the Saviour, and which makes it so terrible to every hearer of the gospel. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for you.

This, then, is the manner of the judgment. On that day all human lives will be revealed. Secret thoughts will be brought to light. Words long forgotten will be forced upon the memory. Actions which were concealed from dearest friends will be unfolded in the presence of all. If they have been good, they will be witnesses for our acquittal; if they have been

evil, they will be witnesses for our condemnation. This fact is revealed not only in the passage under consideration, but in many others in the inspired Scriptures. In the Saviour's description of the judgment, the Judge is made to say, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." Paul says, in his description of the judgment, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." These passages should not be misunderstood. They do not teach that we will be acquitted because our deeds are good, or condemned because our deeds are evil, but that our deeds, whether they are good or evil, will be witnesses for us or against us. We will be acquitted, if acquitted at all, solely because of our union with Christ by faith; but blessed is that man who lives so watchfully and holily, that he will on that day have the witness of holy works; for of such it is said, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Blessed is that man who fills up the book of his life with a record of loving thoughts, and words, and deeds, for when he is dead he will be judged out of the things which are written in this book.

V. The next point to be noticed is **THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH AND THE GRAVE**. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." The second death was explained in the last lecture. It is the eternal punishment of the wicked in the lake of fire. The word which in the first clause of the verse is translated "hell" is *hades*, a word which does not refer to the place of punishment, but to the grave or the realm of departed spirits. The best explanation of the first clause of the verse is to be found in the language of Paul: "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"; that is, after the time here spoken of, death and the grave will be no more. Then there will be no more dying, no more mourners going about our streets, and no more graves to which weeping friends make tearful pilgrimages. The inhabitants of the New Jerusalem will not have occasion to say "I am sick," and "God will wipe away all tears from their eyes." Then the long reign of death will be ended. When this will be, the consummation of all things will have come, for "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

VI. The last point to be noticed is **THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED**. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." In view of what has been said, these words require no explanation. The whole human family will be divided into two classes;

those whose names are written in the book of life, and those whose names are not written in the book of life. The latter will be cast into the lake of fire, that place of torment of which the word of God affords us now and then a glimpse. Those whose names are written in the book of life will, as we are told again and again in the Scriptures, inherit the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world, and everlasting joy will be upon their heads. In the concluding verses of this chapter we have described only the destruction of the former. The following chapters open the gates of heaven, carry us into that better land, and permit us to see something of the employments and happiness of the followers of the Lamb. These themes will be considered in future lectures, in the hope that our souls will have less fear of death and greater longing for the rest that remaineth for the people of God. But we do well to remember that before we can enter that rest, we must pass through the scenes of judgment. That day will be the most solemn and eventful of our history. Then for the first time we will see God face to face. Then we will be on our final trial. If we were to meet God on some lonely mountain as Moses and Elijah met him, our souls would be full of dread at the thought of the approaching meeting. Surely, then, it becomes us to hear the warning, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel," and so to heed that warning, that when it is ours in the by and by to stand together before the judgment seat of Christ, we may hear the words, blessed beyond all comparison, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

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## LECTURE LXIII.

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### THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea.—REV. 21 : 1.

WE enter now upon a great calm, which is in striking and beautiful contrast with the stirring scenes through which our previous expositions have led us. We have been tossed upon stormy seas, we have been buffeted with swelling waves, deep unto deep has been calling at the noise of God's water-spouts ; but the omnipotent voice has spoken, the seas are still, the waves are hushed, and the deep sleeps in unbroken peace. We have followed the church, tempest-driven and tossed ; sometimes it seemed about to be broken in pieces on the rocks, sometimes about to be engulfed in the billows, sometimes about to be forsaken by all the gallant mariners who had guided its course and trimmed its sails ; but just when

we were about to resign all hope and give way to despair, it unexpectedly enters the heavenly harbor and is safe for ever more. We have followed the saints through all the vicissitudes of their earthly pilgrimage; we have seen them surrounded by bitter enemies, defeated in many battles, persecuted unto death; we have heard them cry out in their agony; we have seen the mighty systems of error arrayed against them and triumphing over them; we have seen them reduced in numbers until there were barely enough left on earth to keep alive a testimony for God and for truth; but now we see them, their battles all over, their victories all won, their enemies all defeated, their numbers so increased that they have become a mighty multitude which no man can number, crowned and robed in glory, resting and reigning in the unbroken peace of the celestial country. Our attention has been directed to the city of mystical Babylon, with walls which seemed impregnable, with wealth which seemed inexhaustible, with a beauty which seemed indescribable; and we have seen those walls crumble, that wealth disappear, and that beauty turned into ashes; but now our attention is directed to another city, mightier and holier by far, whose builder and maker is God, whose walls are jasper, whose gates are pearl, whose streets are gold, whose inhabitants are sinless and deathless, even the city of New Jerusalem, which cometh down from God out of heaven. Mystical Babylon was builded upon the seven hills of Rome, which were shaken by earthquakes, and moved out of their places by the mighty convulsions of the natural world; but the New Jerusalem is builded upon mount Zion, which can never be shaken. We have been tracing the history of the old heaven and the old earth, which have been since the beginning; a heaven which is often darkened by clouds and rent by lightnings, and shaken with thunders, and an earth saturated with sin, and soaked with blood, and scarred with graves, and hoary with age; but now a new heaven and a new earth break in upon our astonished vision; a heaven which will never be obscured with darkness, and an earth which will never be marred by sin. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

For this new heaven and new earth, the people of God have long been waiting. For many centuries they have said plainly that they "sought a country," and they looked for "a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Of this new heaven and new earth, the Lord spake by the mouth of Isaiah, his prophet: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days:

for the child shall die an hundred years old ; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat ; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble : for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock : and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Though these concluding words are to receive their primary fulfillment in the latter days of the gospel dispensation, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, when Satan shall be bound and the kingdom of Christ shall triumph, yet they will not receive their complete fulfillment until the heavenly dispensation shall dawn and the eternal glory shall begin. Of this new heaven and new earth, Peter speaks when he says, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is this new heaven and new earth, predicted of old, and waited for by countless thousands of longing saints, which the subject of the present lecture reveals to us with so much clearness.

In order to understand this revelation and appreciate its beauty, we must first of all determine the position which it occupies in this series of visions which has been engaging our attention. Let us then bear in mind what we have already seen, and the explanations we have already made, but especially the visions and explanations of the preceding chapter. In the earlier chapters of the Apocalypse, we traced the history of the church from the apostolic age onward, as shadowed forth under seals, and trumpets, and vials. We rejoiced over its progress and prosperity ; we wept over its persecutions and adversities ; we traced the rise and fall of the great enemies of the church, as shadowed forth under the symbols of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet. Then, in chapter XX, we saw how Satan was bound for a thousand figurative years, how, at the expiration of the millennium, he was loosed for a little season, how he awakened new forms of hostility to the church, and how he was defeated and cast into the prison of the abyss to be tormented for ever and ever. Then we saw the solemn scenes of the final judgment, when those whose names were not written in the Lamb's book of life were cast into the lake of fire. Then follows the chapter upon whose exposition we now enter. To what period in the history of redemption can it refer ? This is a question which is easy to answer, if we have not been altogether at fault in our previous expositions.

If it is true that this book is the consecutive history of the church from the days of John till the end, and if, in previous chapters, we have traced that history down to the final judgment, then this chapter must refer to what is subsequent to the judgment, to the glorious state of those who are openly acknowledged and acquitted at the bar of God. In other words, this chapter and the next, except those verses which are taken up with the apostle's concluding words, contain a description of heaven. This seems so plain that we will spend no time in offering proof. How any one can suppose this magnificent description to refer to the earthly church at any period of its history, is more than we are able to understand. Every word points to heaven; every figure speaks of the rest which God has prepared for his people; every verse tells of what we shall be.

This chapter stands without a parallel in the word of God. It is true many hints have been given us of the future of the saints, but they are only hints. This chapter contains the only extended description. It is brief, too brief for our wishes, but it is long enough for our understanding. We cannot comprehend fully even this much; why then should we wish for more? We must wait for that rapidly approaching day when the hand of death shall touch our eyes, and the scales which have long obscured our vision shall fall; then, if we are permitted to see the King in his beauty, we will know what heaven is. Heaven is here described under types and figures. We are not told in plain language what it is to be, for language is too imperfect, and our minds are too weak. Earthly figures, with which we are in some measure familiar, and which we can partly understand, are used to shadow forth the heavenly. But as this is the most plain and extended description of heaven which the Holy Spirit has been pleased to vouchsafe, it becomes us to enter upon its study with reverent and thankful hearts. From this chapter, we will have to learn nearly all we can hope to know of that better land, until with sanctified feet we are permitted to tread its golden streets.

As has been said, the peaceful scenes of the New Jerusalem are in striking contrast with those scenes of trouble, and war, and bloodshed, which we have been called to consider. They should fall upon our weary spirits like the calm and the sunshine which succeed the tempest, "like the benediction which follows prayer." We cannot appreciate what is here said, if we do not remember what has been said of the old heaven and the old earth. There is a time coming when, if we are Christians, our eyes will close upon the troubled scenes of earth, and without a moment's interruption open upon the peaceful scenes of heaven. With the pain of sickness and the anxieties of a dying hour yet fresh in our memory, we will stand in the joy and blessedness of glory. With the farewell of friends and the sobs of the bereaved yet echoing in our ears, we will listen to the glad hallelujahs of the redeemed. When that hour shall come, when the pain

and the anxiety shall all at once give place to joy and blessedness, when the farewells and sobs shall all at once give place to hallelujahs, with what astonishment will we look, and listen, and worship, an astonishment all the greater because of the contrast between the glorious present and the well remembered past. With some such astonishment should we enter upon the study of this chapter. With the sounds of sinful Babylon yet ringing in our ears, with the tears, and persecutions, and martyrdoms of the saints yet fresh in our memory, the scene suddenly changes as with the wave of a magician's hand, and lo! the New Jerusalem with its unbroken peace, and the glorified saints with their shining crowns, stand before us. Let us lift up our eyes and wonder. Let us lift up our hearts and worship. Let us, if we can, catch something of the fullness of joy which shall be ours by and by, as we to-day are privileged to see the new heaven and the new earth.

The first question which presents itself is this: Where is heaven? Though this question is not unequivocally answered in the words under consideration, yet it may be that their reverent study will afford some information. Heaven, the home of the redeemed: Where is it? The idea has somehow obtained a lodgment in our minds, that heaven is above us in the sky somewhere; but where in that immeasurable sky, which extends above us, and around us, and beneath our feet? With all the knowledge which astronomy has given us of the universe of God, we can form no conception of where heaven is. We hope to enter it when we die, but if our souls were to be separated from our bodies this night, where would we go to find the gates of pearl? In what part of the immensity of space would we wing our way? At which one of the shining orbs which beckon us from on high would we knock and ask for admittance? But we need not disturb ourselves with such questions, for when we die God will send his messengers to bring us safely home. As it was with Lazarus so shall it be with every one who believes in the Saviour of Lazarus. "Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom." Think of this when you next stand at the bedside of the dying saint. Remember that other sympathizers, not of earthly birth, are with you in that sacred chamber; remember that other eyes, not dimmed with tears as your eyes are, are watching the final struggle; remember that the sinless sons of God are waiting to lead the freed spirit up the unknown path that leads to heaven.

We do not know where heaven is. We do not know where the assembled congregation of the disembodied spirits of the saints are waiting for the resurrection of their bodies, save that it is with Christ and in the presence of God. But after the resurrection, when the bodies of the saints shall be raised and united with their spirits, it would seem, from the words before us, and from other passages of Scripture, that this world is to be their home. The old heavens are to roll away as a scroll; the old earth is to melt with fervent heat; the things which are now are to be re-created



and re-formed into a new heaven and a new earth. All traces of sin are to be washed away in the baptism of fire; all the ravages which transgression has wrought are to be smoothed out by the re-creating hand of God; all its barren plains and wildernesses are to be made to bud and blossom as the rose; all its fertile fields are to be made more beautiful, so that they will be like the garden of Eden; the trail of the serpent, which mars all the earthly works of our God, is to be removed for ever; and this world, fair and beautiful as at the first, is to be the home of the redeemed.

This transformation, this re-creation is not without analogy. We believe, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it, that the dead bodies of the saints are to be raised again. They are to come forth from their graves fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. All traces of pain, and suffering, and sin will be removed; all seeds of sickness, deformity and death will be taken away; their gross matter will be purified and refined; they will be in all respects qualified for the sinless and unending life upon which they enter; and yet, when this corruption shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, it will be the same body which walked the earth and slept in the grave. And so we suppose it will be with this earth of ours. It will be refined, re-created, resurrected, and yet it will be the same. It will be greatly changed and made meet to be the home of the glorified, and yet it will be new only in the sense in which the resurrection body of the saints is new. We would not, however, speak too positively on this point. The word of God is not clear enough to dispel every doubt and remove every difficulty. Still these verses seem to teach that after the stirring scenes of the judgment, this world is to be re-created for the eternal home of the saints. What else can the apostle mean when he says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away"?

But while it seems that this world is to be the eternal home of the saints, it is to be greatly changed. In one respect, mentioned in the concluding clause of the verse, the change is marked and noticeable. "There was no more sea." In the present order of things, seas and oceans are necessary to life and happiness. If it was not for its vast expanse of water surface, our globe would be without inhabitant, and as burned and barren as is our waterless satellite. There must, therefore, be a wonderful change in the appearance of this world and in its modes of life, before it can be true that there will be no more sea. It is, however, to be observed that it is not said that there will be no more water, or springs, or fountains, or crystal lakes, but that there will be no more sea, wild, bitter, tempestuous. And this word "sea" is not to be understood literally. Here, as everywhere else in the Apocalypse, it is a symbol. Of what is it a symbol? This is a question which is easily answered. The sea is a symbol of revolution, of trouble, of commotion, of unrest. And the sea, whose waves are never

still, which is continually moved by winds, by tides, and by currents, is a fitting symbol of these things. The symbol is so fitting and so easily understood, that it is common in all languages. It is not unknown even in the plainest speech. "The wicked are as a troubled sea, whose water casts up mire and dirt." In the more figurative parts of Scripture, it is a symbol of frequent occurrence. Daniel speaks of the four winds striving upon the great sea, and of the four beasts which came up out of the sea. Luke draws a vivid picture of the distress of the guilty nations trembling under the judgments of the Almighty in the words, "the sea and the waves roaring." In this book we have the beast rising out of the sea, seas of glass, and seas of blood.

Bearing in mind the meaning of this common symbol, we can have no difficulty in understanding what is meant when it is said of the heavenly state, "there shall be no more sea." In that new world wherein dwelleth righteousness, there will be no more revolution. Sinful ambition will have no place. No wars of conquest or of revenge will transform that Eden into a wilderness. No tramp of marching hosts, no burning cities, no devastated home will mar the beauty of that fair landscape. No human blood will fertilize the plains of that new made earth. All will be peace, abiding and unbroken, for Jesus will be King of all, and his saints will reign with him, their highest ambition more than satisfied with the honor of being the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. This is what is to be in that new earth which will take the place of the old earth, with its many seas, both literal and figurative. In the heavenly state there will be no more symbolical seas casting up mire and dirt, with their winds and waves roaring, out of which shall come monsters to disturb the church.

Here let us pause before entering upon the other characteristics of that better land. We have seen the new heaven and the new earth springing forth at the creator's bidding to be the home of the saints, a new heaven and earth which seem to be the old heaven and earth, redeemed and purified from the curse of sin, and in which there will be no such swelling waves as have swept away so many of the land-marks of the centuries of time. What a change is here shadowed forth! We cannot describe it. We are so familiar with the old heavens and the old earth, filled as they are with the practice and consequences of sin, that we can hardly conceive of the new order of things. It is a theme on which the poet may love to linger. We quote from one, the pious Cowper, whose devout spirit makes him a meet minstrel for such a topic :

"O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,  
Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see,  
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?  
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,

And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach  
 Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field  
 Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,  
 Or fertile only in its own disgrace,  
 Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.  
 The various seasons woven into one,  
 And that one season a perpetual spring;  
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,  
 For there is none to covet; all are full.  
 The lion, and the libbard, and the bear  
 Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon  
 Together, or all gambol in the shade  
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream;  
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man  
 Lurks in the serpent now; the mother sees,  
 And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand  
 Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,  
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.  
 All creatures worship man, and all mankind  
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;  
 That creeping pestilence is driven away;  
 The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart,  
 No passion touches a discordant string,  
 But all is harmony and love. Disease  
 Is not; the pure and uncontaminate blood  
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of ages.  
 One song employs all nations; and all cry,  
 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us'  
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops  
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy,  
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,  
 Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.  
 Behold the measure of the promise filled;  
 See Salem built, the labor of a God!  
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;  
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
 Flock to that light; the glory of all lands  
 Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,  
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,  
 Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;  
 The looms of Ormus and the mines of Ind,  
 And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.  
 Praise is in all her gates; upon her walls,  
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,  
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there  
 Kneels with the native of the farthest west;  
 And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand,  
 And worships. Her report has traveled forth

Into all lands. From ev'ry clime they come  
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,  
 O Zion! An assembly such as earth  
 Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see."

—COWPER'S TASK, Book VI.

## LECTURE LXIV.

### THE NEW JERUSALEM.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.—Rev. 21: 2-4.

WE must not forget that the previous chapters of the Apocalypse have led us down through the history of redemption to the day of the final judgment, and that the present chapter has to do with what is subsequent to the judgment; that is, with the heavenly state of the glorified saints. In the first verse of this chapter, the heavenly state is described as a "new heaven and a new earth," a heaven and earth which seem to be the old heaven and the old earth resurrected, re-created and purified; a heaven and earth in which there will never more be any revolution, commotion or unrest, which are symbolized by the sea whose waves are never still, and whose waters are ever casting up mire and dirt. Though this revelation of heaven is full of joy and comfort for every waiting soul, a still clearer and brighter revelation is awaiting our consideration. In the subject of the present lecture, and in the following verses, heaven is revealed under the figure of a city, more beautiful and glorious than the eye of mortal has ever seen. No revelation can be more satisfying to us, who are but strangers and pilgrims as our fathers were, and who are longing for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. That part of the description of the heavenly city which will engage our attention in the present lecture, contains the following points, which will be noticed in order: The name of this city; its divine builder; its bridal beauty; the perpetual presence of its glorious King, and its sorrowless inhabitants.

I. THE NAME of this symbolical city is the New Jerusalem. "And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem." Here, as in all the previous chap-

ters of this book, we have to do with symbols. We are not to suppose that heaven is here literally described. Heaven is not to be a city descending from God, with streets of gold, and gates of pearl, and foundations of precious stones, but it is to resemble such a city. In other words, such a city is a symbol of the heavenly residence of the glorified saints. Remembering this, we can, with the help of the Spirit, learn from this symbol something of what heaven is to be.

The name of this symbolical city is the New Jerusalem, a name which was peculiarly dear to the saints of the Old Testament church, and therefore peculiarly dear to their spiritual descendants, the saints of the New Testament church. There were many places within the borders of the promised land which were dearly loved by the godly Jews. They loved the cave of Machpelah, for it was the burial place of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They loved the plain of Esdraelon, for it was the spot which had witnessed some of the grandest triumphs of their armies and some of the most disastrous defeats of their enemies. They loved the city of Hebron, for it was the birth-place of David, their greatest king. They loved humble Shiloh, for here the tabernacle, which they had borne all the way from Sinai, stood for many years, and here the tribes had long assembled for the worship of their God. But most of all they loved Jerusalem. Here their temple stood. Here their kings lived and reigned. Here was the centre of their government and their worship. Here God especially manifested his presence and his glory in the solemn rites of their religion. The name Jerusalem would remind them of that temple, and the assembled congregation which so often waited and worshiped in its courts, of the most holy place, and the mercy seat, and the Shechinah, of their altars and their sacrifices, of their rapturous communion with God and the happiest hours of their earthly life.

Therefore the name Jerusalem has been chosen by inspiration to describe that city which is a symbol of heaven. This name indicates that this symbolical city in some respects resembles the capital of the ancient dispensation. Some of these points have been suggested; others will be suggested hereafter. But though there are points of resemblance, there are also points of dissimilarity; and because of these points of dissimilarity, the symbolical city is called, not Jerusalem, but the New Jerusalem. This word "new" tells us that heaven is to be something better than the inhabitants of the city of David ever knew. In the old Jerusalem there was a magnificent temple; in the New Jerusalem there will be no temple. In the former, there were numberless sacrifices; in the latter, all sacrifice will be done away. In the former, there were sons of Belial; in the latter, all will be sons of God. In the former, there were sin and suffering; in the latter, there will be holiness and joy. In the former, the worship was often interrupted by weariness and captivity; from the latter, the unwea-

ried inhabitants will never go out. In the former, the glory of God was partially revealed; in the latter, it will be fully manifested. All this is shadowed forth by the holy city, which is the New Jerusalem. We may look with admiration upon the privileges of the citizens of the old Jerusalem, as they gathered in their temple, saw the glory of their God and heard his words; but their privileges are as nothing when compared with what ours will be in the heavenly city, for we will then enter the New Jerusalem, of which the old Jerusalem was only a faint shadow and imperfect type.

II. THE BUILDER of this symbolical city is God. "I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." The meaning of this language is too plain to be misunderstood. That which comes down from God out of heaven must be created by God. Every good and perfect gift "comes down from God"; that is, God creates and bestows every good and perfect gift. So God is the maker and builder of that city which comes down from heaven. Or if we transfer our thoughts from the symbol to the things symbolized, the meaning is that God has prepared the heavenly city for his people. He has provided for their future happiness. Nothing is left to chance. God is the architect of the New Jerusalem. Let this thought take full possession of our souls. It must therefore be complete in itself and perfectly adapted to those for whom it was built. The builders of the old Jerusalem were many, and their plans were not always in harmony; the builder of the New Jerusalem is one, and his plans are one. The builders of the old Jerusalem were not always able to carry out their designs, and their plans were sometimes interrupted by enemies and death; the builder of the New Jerusalem is omnipotent, and makes everything bow to his will. The builders of the old Jerusalem could not always understand the wants of those for whom they built; the builder of the New Jerusalem knows what will satisfy the souls and accomplish the happiness of his people. Our ideas of the heavenly state may be, and no doubt are, very crude and imperfect. When we enter heaven, if it will ever be our privilege to enter it, we will be met with astonishment after astonishment. But of this we may be sure, that which God has prepared will be complete in itself, and perfectly adapted to the wants of those for whom the preparation was made. Let this thought have a place beside those we have just presented; let the name of the New Jerusalem blend in our memory with the name of its builder; so shall we be prepared to understand and appreciate the blessedness of that better country, as it is to be revealed. The name of the holy city is the New Jerusalem; its builder and maker is God. By as much as God is greater than David and Solomon, and all the rest who labored to build the walls of the earthly Zion, by so much will the New Jerusalem be better than the old.

III. This symbolical city is BEAUTIFUL. Its beauty is described in the words, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This is what might be expected from the points we have already established. If the New Jerusalem resembles the old, which was "beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth," we may surely expect the New Jerusalem to be more beautiful and a greater joy. If God is the builder of the New Jerusalem we may surely expect that it will be beautiful, for all God's gifts are perfect. But its beauty is expressly asserted in the comparison which is here instituted. This symbolical city is as beautiful "as a bride adorned for her husband." This figure is so common and so easily understood, that it requires no explanation. In fact any explanation will weaken its force and mar its beauty. Whatever good taste can suggest or art can accomplish is employed to increase the beauty of the bride who is led to the altar. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire"? is a question of the prophet, and the force of this question is felt in every land in which the ordinance is honored.

But let us not mistake the exact point of the illustration we are now considering. The church of Christ is often in the Scriptures compared to the "bride, the Lamb's wife." This comparison underlies the Song of Solomon, which the church is not yet spiritual enough to understand. It underlies Psalm 45, which celebrates the majesty of the King, and the loveliness of his bride. It underlies many of the sublimest passages of the Old Testament prophecy, in which a sinful church is compared to an unfaithful wife. It underlies some of the most beautiful visions of the Apocalypse. In all these passages, the comparison is instituted to show the great honor bestowed upon the earthly church, and the intimate relation which exists between it and its risen Lord; but in the passage before us the comparison is instituted for an entirely different purpose. It is to show the beauty of the earthly church, or rather of the place of its heavenly residence. Even while we are yet dwellers on the earth, we appreciate beauty, we long for beauty. Our longings for beauty are satisfied in part, for this world of ours, in spite of the ravages which sin has wrought and of the graves which death has dug, is a beautiful world. Nevertheless, beauty here is ever mingled with deformity and imperfections, and our appreciation of beauty is blunted by sin. When we reach heaven, we will see perfect beauty without a stain, and our new hearts will drink its full enjoyment. The holy city, whose name is New Jerusalem, and which cometh down from heaven, will be as beautiful "as a bride adorned for her husband."

IV. Something still better remains to be told of that holy city, better than its new name, better than the name of its builder, better than its bridal beauty; and that better thing is THE PERPETUAL PRESENCE OF ITS

GLORIOUS KING. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." In all the previous dispensations, there has been an infinite distance between God and men. He has sometimes manifested himself in their midst, but these manifestations have been only occasional. And in these occasional manifestations of the divine presence, men have seen only a part of his glory. In the heavenly state, this infinite distance will be bridged. God will draw near to men and reveal to them his divine glory as they never saw it before. Men will be brought near to God, and will hold such communion with him as they never held before. "The tabernacle of God is with men." This word "tabernacle" carries us back to the Jewish economy, and to the sacred tent around which the ceremonies and privileges of that economy so closely centered. It reminds us of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, of times when the voice of God spake his will from the holy place, of worship and sacrifices which were visibly accepted, of the feasts of the passover, pentecost and the tabernacles, when the saints of old enjoyed blessed communion. And through these memories of the past, it foretells a time when God's visible presence will never be withdrawn from men, and when their communion with him will never be interrupted.

Not only will God dwell with men in that better time, "they shall be his people." They are his choice. I will not here attempt to explain this truth. The sovereign choice of God, the election of his saints, is a mystery which lies far beyond the reach of our humanity. Nor will I attempt to reconcile this doctrine with our responsibility. I mention it only as a truth, repeated and repeated calmly and clearly, in the word of God. God's saints are his by everlasting choice. "I have chosen you; ye have not chosen me." They are his by purchase. They are not their own; they are bought with a price, even the precious blood of the Lamb. They are property, not man's, but God's, for God paid the price of their redemption. They are his by conquest. Once they were Satan's slaves, but the great Captain of their salvation girded on his armor, attacked the stronghold of the enemy, bound him in chains, and set his prisoners free. They are his by possession. He has sent his Holy Spirit to take possession of those he has chosen, and purchased, and conquered, and the Spirit has inlaid them with holiness, as the temple of the old Jerusalem was inlaid with gold, and has made them meet to be the dwelling place of God. They are his by likeness. Even now they bear that likeness, but its lines are so blurred and blotted by sin and imperfections that it is often doubted and sometimes denied. In the hereafter that likeness will be unquestioned. Even their vile bodies will be fashioned after his glorious body, and in all respects they will be like him, for they shall see him as he is. Beholding their Saviour, no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face, they will be



changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. While all this is measurably true now, while the earthly saints are God's by choice, by purchase, by conquest, by possession and by likeness, it will not be true in its full measure till the eternal glory begins.

And this blessed promise has its complement, without which it would be imperfect. Not only will the saints be God's people, "God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Who can measure the greatness of the privilege which is here unfolded? When one says, I will be your friend, we expect him to be to us all that is included in the word friend. When one says, I will be your father, we expect him to be to us all that is included in the word father, and to extend to us all the protection and all the love which a father has for his children. When one says, I will be your physician, we expect him to be to us all that is included in the word physician, and to use all his skill and experience to deliver us from disease and to preserve us in health. So when God says that he will be our God, we may expect him to be to us all that is expressed or implied in that name. He will be our friend, our father, our physician; he will rule over us, and guide us, and protect us, and love us; his attributes will be a wall around us and a glory in the midst of us. To sum it all up in one word, he will be our God. It is this that fills the New Jerusalem with its greatest joy. Its crowns will be ours; its inheritance will be ours; the city itself will be ours; but better than all else, God will be ours. Truly that people are blessed whose God is the Lord! And this is the condition of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, for they will enjoy the perpetual presence of their glorious King, and all that this presence implies.

V. Another characteristic of that holy city remains to be considered—a characteristic which comes home with power to the broken hearts of this vale of tears: ITS INHABITANTS WILL BE SORROWLESS. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." What a contrast do these words reveal between the present and the future! "In this world ye shall have tribulation," is a prophecy concerning whose fulfillment there can be no doubt. No heart throbs on earth which has not felt the agony of disappointment. No lips open on earth which do not betimes give utterance to cries of anguish. No eye looks up to heaven from the plains of earth, which is not every now and then dimmed with tears. If our hearing was only sharp enough, we could hear by day and by night the patter of the tears which are ever falling; we would know no rest, because of the cry of hearts which are breaking somewhere in the world. Here there is no heart safe from sorrow; there is no home strong enough to shut out the enemies of human happiness; there is no lock intricate enough to baffle the great destroyer; there is no love omnipotent enough to defend from sickness and death.

But in the New Jerusalem which God has builded for the home of his people, there will be no sorrow. All tears will be removed, and all the springs of tears will be dried up. One source of present sorrow is the sicknesses to which we and ours are liable. No one is safe from disease. It undermines the vigor of the greatest strength, and it mars the freshness of the most peerless beauty. It steps over the barriers which wealth and skill may build to hinder its coming, and visits the hovel from which poverty has driven almost every other visitor. But in the New Jerusalem this source of sorrow will be removed. There sickness will have no place; disease will find nothing on which to feed; years will be no burden, and age no weariness. Another source of present sorrow is the bereavements of time; and how bitter are the tears which they cause to flow! They are confined to no land, to no age, to no circle. They are the common lot of our fallen humanity. At this moment our relatives in eternity outnumber our relatives in time. There are more familiar names upon the tombstones of our cemeteries than upon the door-plates of our houses. The field of memory is more densely peopled than the field of present experience. But in the New Jerusalem this source of sorrow will be removed. No mourners will go about its streets; no signs of dissolution will hang upon its doors; no wail of bereavement or funeral dirge will have a place in the glad alleluias of its worship. Another source of present sorrow is the disappointments of time. What beautiful plans we build! What beautiful hopes we cherish! But who has not seen his plans crumble into dust, and the hopes he has cherished, for his own future and for the future of his children, utterly blasted? Broken hearts are in palaces; sleepless nights are not unknown on beds of down; cold shadows are ever falling in the brightest homes; ruined plans and hopes are in the gayest hearts. But in the New Jerusalem this source of sorrow will be removed. Every hope will be more than fulfilled, every heart will be more than satisfied with the rivers of pleasures which are at God's right hand. Another source of sorrow is the presence of sin in the soul. Every Christian must go mourning all his days, with his head bowed like a bulrush, for when he would do good evil is present with him. He must ever cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? But in the New Jerusalem this cry will be lost in the anthem of complete redemption. Into it nothing that defileth shall ever come; in it there will be nothing to repent of, and therefore no tears of penitence to shed. Another source of sorrow is the presence of sin in the world around us. The Psalmist says, "Rivers of waters run down from mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." The prophet says, "O that mine head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Jesus wept over guilty Jerusalem; Paul grieved over godless Athens. But in the New Jerusalem this source of sorrow will be removed,

for the new heaven and the new earth will be a sinless Eden. There are tears, too, because of the inconsistencies of our fellow Christians, because of the little good we are doing, and because of the desires which nothing earthly can satisfy. The world itself is a fountain of tears, and we who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. But in the New Jerusalem all these sources of tears will be removed, for all the former things are passed away for ever. What a world this would be if it could be announced that from this time onward there would be no more tears! And this will be the condition of that holy city in which we hope to stand. Its inhabitants will be sorrowless, for "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

And this is heaven as it is described to us by the Spirit of inspiration, under this beautiful figure of a holy city. We have seen its new name, its divine builder, its bridal beauty, the perpetual presence of its glorious King, and its sorrowless inhabitants. Is it any wonder that the children of the living God wait with hope and expectation? Is it any wonder that they look forward with unutterable longing for the fullness of the time to come? Their longings are beautifully described by the inspired Psalmist of the church, who under the figure of a captivity thus sings of the present sorrows and intense yearnings of every saintly soul while a pilgrim and a captive in this vale of tears :

"By Babel's streams we sat and wept,  
For memory still to Zion clung ;  
The winds alone our harp-strings swept,  
That on the drooping willows hung.

There our rude captors, flushed with pride,  
A song required to mock our wrongs ;  
Our spoilers called for mirth, and cried,  
'Come, sing us one of Zion's songs.'

O how can we the Lord's song sing  
While thus an exile, captive band ?  
O how can we our voices bring  
To sing God's songs in this strange land ?

Jerusalem, God's holy hill,  
If I of thee forgetful prove,  
Let my right hand forget its skill  
With grace the harp's sweet strings to move.

If I do not remember thee,  
Let my parched tongue its utterance cease ;  
If my chief joy be dear to me  
Beyond Jerusalem's joy and peace."

## LECTURE LXV.

## THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.—REV. 21: 5-8.

IN the subject of the present lecture the holy city is still further described. We have its superiority, its certainty, a description of its inhabitants, and a description of those who are without.

I. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE HEAVENLY STATE is briefly expressed in the words, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." These words were uttered by God himself; therefore, they must be true. As they were spoken with such solemn emphasis from the heavenly throne, they demand our serious attention. Our knowledge is largely founded on our experiences. This is one reason why we know so little of heaven. It lies so far beyond the sphere of present experience, that we see as through a glass darkly. And this is the reason why these revelations of heaven are based upon our experience, and why the things of heaven are described by comparing them with things with which we are familiar on earth. Heaven is in some respects to resemble those cities in which we now live. It is to have walls, and gates, and streets, and palaces; it is to have a builder, and king, and inhabitants; it is to have joys, and employments and rewards. But though it is in some respects to resemble those cities in which we now live, and though it is compared to such cities in order that we may form some correct idea of what awaits us, we must not forget that it is to be greatly different from the present and vastly superior to the present. This is expressed by the word "new." In what respect is this heavenly Jerusalem to be new? It is to be new in all respects. It is to be new in its situation. The cities with which we are familiar, are builded in this world, which is cursed with sin, and shaken with earthquakes, and watered with blood; but the New Jerusalem is to be builded in a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, in which there will be no sea of commotion or unrest, and into which no enemy will ever come. It is to be new in its builder. The cities with which we are familiar, are builded by men; but the builder and maker of the New Jerusalem is God. It is to be new in its object. The cities with which

ters of this book, we have to do with symbols. We are not to suppose that heaven is here literally described. Heaven is not to be a city descending from God, with streets of gold, and gates of pearl, and foundations of precious stones, but it is to resemble such a city. In other words, such a city is a symbol of the heavenly residence of the glorified saints. Remembering this, we can, with the help of the Spirit, learn from this symbol something of what heaven is to be.

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no explanation is necessary here. We need only refer to the purpose for which it is introduced. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. He is therefore divine, immutable, eternal and omnipotent. If these are his attributes, there can be no question that he will do what he has promised. Surely we dwellers on the earth may rest with confidence on the revelation that in due time all things will be made new. No stronger assurance could be given than has been given. That which is past is not more certain than that which God has promised. On this divine revelation we may build our hopes and wait with confidence for the coming of that city whose builder and maker is God.

III. THE INHABITANTS OF THE HOLY CITY are described in these words: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." In these words we have a threefold description of the inhabitants of heaven; they are those who have been thirsty and have drunk freely out of the fountain of the water of life; they are those who have overcome, and have inherited all things; they are the sons of God.

In the first part of this threefold description it is said, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Salvation is here compared to living water by which thirst is quenched and strength revived. This is a familiar figure to every reader of the Bible. Isaiah uses it when he says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." The Saviour uses it when he says, "Whosoever shall drink of the water I shall give him, it shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." It is used in the Apocalypse when it is said, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The propriety of this figure cannot be called in question by any one who knows anything of the gospel plan of redemption. What does this common and easily understood figure reveal to us of the character of heaven's inhabitants? They are those who were once strangers and pilgrims on the earth; they are those who once were wanderers in the wilderness of the world, and who thirsted for holiness, pardon and happiness; they are those who have been led by the heavenly Father to the fountain which he has opened, and who have satisfied their souls with living water. Or, dropping the figure, they are those who felt their need of salvation, and who have found it in the way of divine appointment, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second part of this threefold description it is said, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Here is another common figure. The

Christian life is a warfare. What does this figure reveal to us of the inhabitants of heaven? They are those who, putting on the armor of God, have fought the good fight; they are those who have overcome the enemies by whom they were surrounded—sin and its attractions, the world and its allurements and afflictions, and Satan and his hosts; they are those who have followed the great Captain of their salvation through temptation, suffering and death; they are those who, having done all this, have inherited the kingdom.

In the third part of this description it is said, "I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Here is another common figure. Christians have been adopted into the family of God, and have been made sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. What does this figure reveal to us of the inhabitants of heaven? They are those who have, through grace, been adopted into the family of God; they are those who have received the spirit of adoption, and the names and disposition of children; they are those who have enjoyed the protection, the education, the love, and the chastisement which the heavenly Father provides for those of his household; they are those who are the sons of God, and who are all that is implied in the word "sons"; they are those to whom God is a father, and all that is implied in the word "father."

It is well for us that these characteristics of the inhabitants of heaven are so easily understood; for we cannot be deceived, even while we are here on earth, as to whether we are among the number of those who are to dwell for ever in the heavenly city of our God. We must not think that death works any magical change in our spiritual condition. "As the tree falleth, so it must lie." As we are when we die, so will we enter into eternity. The future life is only a continuation of the life which is begun here. The state of glory is only the state of grace completed and perfected. We cannot, therefore, expect to be saints of God hereafter, unless we are saints of God here. We cannot expect to be among the conquerors of the future, unless we are among the conquerors of the present. We cannot expect to drink at the fountain of life in heaven, unless we first drink at that fountain on earth. Are we now, though our spiritual taste is weakened and impaired by sin, drinking from the wells of salvation? Then we may rest assured that by and by our souls will quench their thirst at that river which flows hard by the throne. Are we now fighting our foes and wresting dearly bought victory from their powerful hands? Then we may rest assured that by and by the last battle will be fought, and the inheritance of the conquerors will be ours. Are we now sons of God, called by his name, and transformed in some measure into his likeness? Then we may rest assured that by and by we will enter the many-mansioned house of our heavenly Father, from which we have long been exiled, and be restored to the full privileges of sonship which we justly forfeited. For these are the



words of him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

IV. The description of **THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT** is this: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." What a striking contrast there is between those who are here described, and those who are described in the words we have just considered—those who have satisfied their thirsty souls at the fountain of life, who have overcome their enemies and inherited the kingdom, and who are the sons of God. It seems as if there could be no danger of mistaking one for the other. And in that future world, when faith will be lost in victory, and unbelief will reach its full development, there will be no such danger. But here on earth, where the saints are yet defiled with sin, and where the lines of the divine likeness are so blurred and blotted as to be often doubted and sometimes denied—where sinners, through the restraints which God has laid upon them, are measurably held in check, it is not always easy to determine who are the heirs of heaven, and who are among the number of those against whom the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem will be closed. To help in such determination, the character of the latter is here set in emphatic contrast with the character of the former.

First among those who are without are the "fearful." The fearful are those who have not firmness to stand by their professed principles, or who are afraid to profess themselves friends of God in the wicked world. They have convictions but they dare not live up to them. The fear of men keeps them from being on the Lord's side. There were such in the days of the incarnation. It was this fear which long held back Nicodemus. It was this fear which held back many others whose names have not been mentioned. This fear has at this day a powerful influence, for in every age there have been those who have been ashamed of Christ before men. These fearful ones are in danger of condemnation. The "unbelieving" are those who have not faith. They are avowed infidels, or those who are infidels at heart; they are those who, for any reason, refuse or neglect to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To this class, the Scribes and Pharisees belonged. To this class, those who now openly reject the gospel belong. To this class, those who live in carelessness belong, for faith in Christ is an essential qualification of the citizens of the New Jerusalem. The "abominable" are those who live in open sin, who seek their pleasure in unholy thoughts, words and actions. To this class, a mighty multitude of those who have lived on earth belong,

and they must be excluded from that world which is<sup>1</sup> pure and holy. "Murderers" are those who are guilty of taking human life, or of cherishing those passions which lead to the taking of human life; "for he that hateth his brother is a murderer." This class includes the persecutors of the saints, those who carry on unrighteous wars, those who are wasters of human life through slavery, or oppressive labor, or criminal carelessness, or dueling, or revenge, or intemperance. It includes all those who in thought or in deed are shedders of human blood; for they all, unless they repent and are renewed, cannot hope to enter the New Jerusalem. "Whoremongers" are those who are licentious, who violate that purity of heart and life which is enjoined in the seventh commandment. The Saviour charged this vice upon many who were attendants on his ministry; and it is a vice which prevails to an alarming extent in the days in which we live, undermining the whole social structure, and winked at by those from whom better things might be expected. All such will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. "Sorcerers" are those who deceive men by claiming supernatural powers, and by professing to hold intercourse with the spirits of the departed. By their claims they promote superstition, and turn men away from lives of faith and holiness. "Idolaters" are those who worship idols, and who give the glory and service which belong to God to anything else, whether false deities, or angelic spirits, or human beings, or inferior animals, or any created thing. "Liars" are those who are false in their statements, their promises or their contracts, false either toward men or toward God. All these shall be left without the New Jerusalem. They will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone. They will die the second death.

What a fearful catalogue! What a terrible destiny! And I cannot pass on without referring more particularly to that sin which is the foundation on which all the others rest, and out of which all the others grow, the sin of unbelief. It has been made a matter of complaint that heaven and immortal life should hang on such a slender thread as faith. But is faith, which is just confidence in God, so slender a thread? Without confidence among men, society would be demoralized. Destroy confidence in our financial institutions, and ruin comes. Destroy confidence between husband and wife, parents and children, physician and patient, lawyer and client, and in the other departments of the social and commercial world, and society becomes a rope of sand. If faith or confidence in men is so important, surely faith or confidence in God must be more important. Yet unbelief is the most common of all sins. It sometimes shows itself in the open rejection of Christianity. It calls the Bible a lie, and Christ crucified a fable. This is vulgar infidelity. It more frequently shows itself in practice. There are those who profess to believe every truth of Christianity, but the gospel has no hold on their hearts, and its great voice is no

music for their ears. They are just what they would have been if Christianity had never been proclaimed in the world. There are also those who reject certain truths which Christianity reveals, because they cannot understand them, or because they do not love them. There are also those who reject nothing, but who simply neglect to put forth that faith which Christianity commands. All these, disguise it as we may, are among the unbelieving. If a man is known by the company he keeps, what must be their character? They are, by the word of God, numbered among liars, sorcerers, idolaters and murderers in the present world, and they will have the same home in the world to come. Let unbelievers ponder this thought. You may now be choice in your company. You may now refuse to associate with those who violate the laws of honor, honesty and chastity. Are you willing to associate with them for ever? If not, withdraw yourselves now; for the same dividing line which runs through this life will run through the next.

Let believers ponder the thoughts which have been presented. In the inspired words we have reviewed, we have seen something of the New Jerusalem, for which you are looking and waiting. After death has come, after the earth has been burned and the heavens rolled together as a scroll, after the judgment has passed, you will enter in through the gates into the city. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3: 11-14.

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## LECTURE LXVI.

### THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.—REV. 21: 9-14.

WE now enter upon a more minute account of the holy city, which is the symbol of heaven. The previous verses have sketched the outlines of the New Jerusalem, but in the following verses these outlines are to be filled up. Our attention has been called to the name of the holy city, to its divine builder, to its peerless beauty, to its glorious King, to its sorrowless and deathless inhabitants, to its superiority, to the characteristics of its citizens, and to the characteristics of those who are without. Now our attention is to be called to those details which will give us a clearer idea of the symbolical city, and which will lead us to a better understanding of what heaven is to be. There can be no doubt that the exile of Patmos loved to linger upon the revelations of this vision. After all the troubled visions which had been made to pass before him, the sight of this holy city must have soothed his troubled spirit. And we may well love to linger upon the revelations of this vision, for it tells us more of heaven than we are told elsewhere in the word of God. What we cannot learn of heaven from this chapter, we cannot hope to know till, through divine grace, we stand in the midst of its blessedness. Some of the details of the New Jerusalem are set before the apostle and before us by one of the seven angels. And this is the first thing which claims our attention in the subject of the present lecture, viz. :

I. THE ANGELIC GUIDE through the streets of the heavenly city. "There came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me." Which one of the seven angels it was who was now commissioned to show the apostle the wonders of the city, we do not know, but it seems more than probable that it is the same one who occupies such a prominent place in the vision of chapter XVII. In the first verse of that chapter, we are told, "there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." It was appropriate that the angel who had been employed in describing the enemies of the church and their overthrow, should be employed in describing the church and its final triumph and glory. And the fact that this is the same angel who has taken part in previous visions, must convince us that each one of these visions is a part of one great revelation. To understand their true meaning, they must be explained as a whole, and not as separate and independent revelations. The explanation of the angel may be relied on with implicit confidence. He is one of the holy ones of God, and he is commissioned by God to do this particular work. We must, therefore, believe his words as if they were the words of God himself. Following, then, the steps of this angel, and listening to his words, let us see what we can learn of the details of the city of the New Jerusalem.

II. The next thing which claims our attention is **THE NAME** which the angel gives to the holy city. "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." There can be no doubt that the angel applies this name to the holy city, for we are told in the next verse that he carried the apostle to a great and high mountain, and showed him that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Nor is it difficult to discover the way in which this figurative name was suggested in the present circumstances. In that vision to which we referred a little while ago, this same angel described Antichrist under the figure of a drunken harlot. This false church committed fornication with the kings of the earth, and was drunken with the blood of the saints. Now, when he would describe the true church, he employs a related figure. The true church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. In order to appreciate the beauty of this symbolical representation, we must bring these two visions together. We must let the gaudily-dressed and drunken harlot stand side by side with the white-robed and beautiful bride. We must read the first verse of chapter XVII, in immediate connection with the words we are now considering. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." "And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."

The propriety of this figure to describe the glory and honor of the true church and the intimate relation which exists between it and its King, cannot be called in question. So appropriate is it that it is one of the common figures of the Bible. As an illustration of the manner in which this figure is employed, I would refer to Ezekiel 16. In that chapter, the church in its natural state is pictured as a wretched infant, cast out by its unnatural parents into the open field in the day in which it was born, weltering in its own blood, with no eye to pity, and no hand to save. But on this helpless and friendless outcast, the Lord had pity. As he passed by and saw it polluted in its own blood, he said, Live. He watched over her till she had reached the comeliness of adult life, and then he entered into a covenant with her, and she became his. He clothed her with beautiful robes, and put costly jewels upon her, and espoused her to himself. Though she was often unfaithful to her Lord, forgetting the vows of her espousals, yet he ever forgave her unfaithfulness and forgetfulness, and restored her to his favor. All this the prophet describes in that wonderful chapter. And the sequel of this history is revealed in the words under consideration. When the long espousal is ended, the church redeemed from all uncleanness will be brought home to glory with shouts of joy on every side, the figurative marriage will be celebrated in the heavenly cathedral, and the church will be for evermore the bride, the Lamb's wife.

This figure shows the superiority of the heavenly over the earthly church. The latter is only espoused to Christ; the former is his wife. It also shows the great honor which is put on the redeemed of our fallen race. The Son of God passed by the angels, and gave to his church the highest place in his kingdom. It also shows the intimate relation which exists between the church and its Lord. He calls his redeemed not only his servants, not only his friends, not only his children, but his bride. It also explains something of the church's eternal glory. While the angels stand before the throne and cast their crowns upon the jeweled pavements, and bow in humblest adoration, the church sits upon the throne and reigns with Christ, for she is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Inasmuch as this figure reveals all this, and inasmuch as it occupies so prominent a place in the word of God, it is one to which our thoughts and our faith should often turn. Our Maker is our husband. He is married unto us. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife.

III. THE LOCATION of the holy city demands a few remarks. "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." There have been those who have tried to fix the geographical location of the great and high mountain which is here referred to; but surely those who have made the attempt have forgotten that this is a vision. It was not in the body, but in the spirit that the apostle was carried to the mountain. This mountain was only a part of the vision. John is represented as standing upon such a mountain that he might have a distinct view of the symbolical city. It is, therefore, useless to attempt to fix the locality of this mountain, for it has no locality, save in vision. The meaning of the symbol is this: the apostle was so placed that he could distinctly see and describe the glories of the New Jerusalem.

In this verse several characteristics of the symbolical city, which have been referred to in the previous parts of the vision, are again brought to our notice. Its name is Jerusalem. It is a holy city. It descends from God out of heaven. These points have been recently discussed, and there is no necessity in discussing them again. But I cannot pass on without referring to the thought that this world, resurrected, renewed and purified, is possibly to be the eternal home of the saints. The New Jerusalem is here described as descending from heaven, and to what place could it descend but to the earth? And this supposition harmonizes with the revelation contained in the first verse of this chapter. John saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. This supposition also harmonizes with the predictions of the Old Testament prophets, which point to this world as the future residence of the saints. However, on this point we may not speak too positively, for the word of God is not clear enough

to answer every question, and remove every doubt. Wherever heaven is, it will satisfy all the desires of our immortal souls, by the absence of sin and sorrow, and the presence of God.

IV. THE LIGHT of this heavenly city is the next thing which claims our attention. "Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." The same idea is even more clearly expressed in verse 23. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." From these passages, it appears that the luminary of the New Jerusalem, which will never be darkened or eclipsed, is the glory of God; that is, God will dwell in this city, and his glorious presence will be its light. It will help us to understand this revelation if we turn back to the Old Testament, and see how the visible presence of God was then manifested. Who has not heard of the Shechinah? What was the Shechinah? It was a brilliant and glorious light, enveloped in a cloud, and generally concealed by the cloud, so that the cloud alone was visible. On particular occasions it was revealed in dazzling brightness. This Shechinah usually abode in the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, between the Cherubim, on the mercy seat. It was concealed by a heavy vail which hung before it; but sometimes it manifested itself in the presence of all. Thus it manifested itself on mount Sinai, and in the pillar of fire which guided the Israelites in their long journey through the wilderness. Thus it manifested itself again and again in the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the glory of the Lord that filled the temple. And whenever it manifested itself, it was a most brilliant and glorious light, which exceeded the brightness of the noonday sun.

Bearing this in mind, we will have no difficulty in understanding the words before us. In this New Jerusalem God will ever dwell, for we are told, in verse 3, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them." At that time God will dwell with men, not merely by his spiritual presence as he does now, and as he has ever done in all ages of this world's history; he will dwell with them by his visible presence. And that visible presence will continually manifest itself, as heretofore it has done only on rare occasions, in the most brilliant and glorious light, a light so brilliant and glorious that the sun will never more be needed.

If we could carry ourselves in the spirit into the most holy place of the temple of Solomon, and stand beside the high priest on the day of atonement, and see the Shechinah as it rested on the mercy seat; if we could stand on the shores of the Red sea, on the memorable night of Pharaoh's destruction, and see the Shechinah as it brought light and peace to the hosts of Israel and dismay and terror to the hosts of Egypt; if we could

go back to any of those remarkable occasions when the Shechinah showed itself to the faithful church of the old dispensation; we might be able to form a better idea of the glory of God, which is to be the luminary of the New Jerusalem. But as we cannot do this, we will have to use to the best possible advantage the helps which are within our reach. The light of the Shechinah will be brighter than that of the sun. It will be more enduring than that of the sun, for while the sun shall grow dim with age, the glory of the Lord will endure for ever. It will be more pleasing than that of the sun, for it is "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." There is so much uncertainty as to what precious stones are meant in this description of the New Jerusalem, that it will not be advisable to attempt to identify them. It is true the names are mentioned, especially in the description of the foundations of the city, but some of these names are so obscure, and some were so loosely applied in ancient days, that it would be a waste of time to attempt to determine in modern language what names correspond with jasper, and sapphire, and chalcedony, and all the rest. It will be sufficient to say, in the present connection, that the glory of God which lightens the New Jerusalem is not so much like the light of the sun, as it is like the soft radiance of a precious gem. In the light of this luminary, which no cloud will ever darken, and over which no eclipse will cast a shadow, the glorified saints will ever live and walk. While we are yet on earth, we know something of what it is to walk in the light of God's countenance; we are not wholly without experience of the joy which attends the sensible presence of God; nor are we wholly without experience of the agony which attends the darkening of the paternal face; still we come far short of full knowledge, both of the joy and of the agony. Of all the thousands who have walked the earth in human form, only one really knew. That one was Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, in the days of his humiliation, he regarded the withdrawal of the sensible presence of God as the greatest of all his sorrows. It was this that drew from him the bitterest of his bitter cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"! When we enter the New Jerusalem, which is lightened by the glory of God, we will know what it is to walk in the light of his countenance, and it will be to us, if I mistake not, a source of unending wonder that we were, while on earth, so indifferent to his glorious presence. Among the glories of the better land, this deserves a prominent place. The luminary of the New Jerusalem will be the glory of God.

V. THE DEFENCES of the New Jerusalem is the last point which claims our attention in the present lecture. "And it had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children



of Israel. On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." In these words, four defences are specially mentioned: the wall of the city, its gates, its sentinels, and its foundations. A few words on each of these points will be all that is necessary to give us a clear idea of the symbol, and to assure us of the perpetual safety of the New Jerusalem. In nothing do ancient cities differ from modern cities more widely than in the walls by which they were surrounded. On account of the methods of warfare which were then employed, a wall was essential to the safety of a city. The city which had no wall was at the mercy of its enemies, but the city which had a wall could defy its foes. Therefore, when a city was builded, particular attention was paid to its wall; and when a city was captured, its first great humiliation was to have its wall leveled with the dust. Both these statements are illustrated in the various rebellions and overthrows of the old Jerusalem. To us, familiar with all the appliances of modern civilization, the wall of a city does not have the same importance it had to those who lived in the lands of the Bible. To them, a wall was of the first importance. A city without a wall was incomplete. This is the reason why, in this vision, the wall occupies such a prominent place. This holy city, which was a symbol of heaven, had a wall. This wall was great, that is, thick and strong; it was high, so high that its measurement, given in a subsequent verse, must fill us with astonishment. Those whose lot it is to stand behind these walls are for ever safe. No enemy can overthrow them. No engine, though devised by satanic cunning and worked by satanic power, can batter them down. In this respect, what a difference there is between the present and the future! Here there are no walls strong enough to resist our great enemy; there are no walls high enough to baffle his ingenuity; but those who stand behind the battlements of heaven need fear no ill, for against these battlements the counsels of hell can never prevail.

In order to complete the defences of the city, something more than a wall is necessary. There must be gates, through which the inhabitants of the city can enter, and which can be shut and defended against the approach of every foe. Therefore, this heavenly city has gates. These gates are twelve in number. Twelve, as we have had occasion to show, is the number of heavenly perfection. On these twelve gates were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, the name of one tribe on each gate. This part of the symbol shadows forth the fact that this holy city is to be the residence of all God's people. All the tribes of spiritual Israel will enter through these gates. In that glorified state all the redeemed of God will be gathered into one family. This part of the symbol also shadows forth the fact that this holy city is to be the residence of

none but God's people. None will enter through these gates who do not belong to one of the tribes of spiritual Israel. These gates were equally distributed on each of the sides of the city; for the city, as we learn from another verse, is in the form of a square, and three gates were on the north side, three on the east side, three on the south side, and three on the west side. This part of the symbol shadows forth the fact that all the children of spiritual Israel, no matter from what part of the world they come, will find ready access to their heavenly home. When they come from all the lands, from the north, south, east and west, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they will find open gates through which they may enter the city. These twelve gates suggest not only the safety of the city, but also the greatness of its extent. There is room in the New Jerusalem, room in its twelve gates of access, room within its towering walls, room in its golden streets, room in the love of God, room in the atonement of Christ, room in the offers of the gospel. The twelve gates, three on each side, stand open to welcome all the members of all the tribes of spiritual Israel, that mighty multitude which no man can number.

The defences of the city are still further provided for by the twelve angels who stand as sentinels at the twelve gates. The allusion is of course to the custom of placing sentinels at the gates of ancient cities. Thebes, with its hundred gates, had, we are told, a hundred sentinels to keep watch and ward night and day. The temple at Jerusalem had watching priests and Levites to see that no unclean person entered, and to do any service required at their hands. The garden of Eden had a sentinel cherub with a flaming sword to guard its entrance. So the New Jerusalem had an angel sentinel at each of its gates, to admit those who had a right to the tree of life, and to defend the inhabitants from every approaching foe.

The defence of the city is still further provided for by the firm foundations upon which its walls are builded, foundations of precious stones which the lapse of time cannot weaken or overthrow. On these twelve foundation stones were written the names of the twelve apostles. This is in accordance with the inspired declaration: "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." For this is the way in which the church, visible and invisible, is to be built. Christ is the corner-stone. The apostles are the foundation stones. The saints are the living stones of which its walls are to be composed. With such a foundation as this, a foundation which can never be moved, the city is safe for evermore.

This is the city of the New Jerusalem as it is described in the verses before us. By the help of this vivid description, which the Spirit of inspiration has given us, we can see it rising before our eyes. Its luminary is the glory of God. Its defences are complete. Its walls, and its gates, and its sentinels, and its foundations, make assurance doubly sure. How

unspeakable must be the joy of those who pass through those gates, and having been welcomed by those sentinel angels, stand within those walls which can never be moved! Will this ever be our lot? There is room. The gates are open yet. If this is our hope, we should make ourselves familiar with the New Jerusalem, just as the Jews made themselves familiar with the old Jerusalem, the object of their love; for to us is addressed the exhortation of the Spirit, not with reference to mount Zion of the old economy, but with reference to the new Zion, that great and high mountain on which the heavenly Jerusalem will stand:

About mount Zion walk,  
Survey her walls with care,  
And look upon her lofty towers;  
See what their numbers are.

Observe her palaces,  
And mark her ramparts well,  
That so what you have seen you may  
To future ages tell.

## LECTURE LXVII.

### THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.—REV. 21: 15–21.

We come now to the measurement of the holy city.

I. The first thing which claims our attention is THE PERSON BY WHOM THE MEASUREMENT IS MADE. It was an angel, the same angel who had been explaining to the apostle the details of the New Jerusalem, and who is described in a previous verse as one of the seven angels who had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues. It has been shown to be more than probable that this angel, who was commissioned to explain to John the final triumph and glory of the true church, is the same angel who in previous visions was commissioned to explain the rise and progress, the decline

and fall of the false church. At any rate, one thing is certain: as this measurer and describer of the holy city was an angel of God, appointed to do this very work, and familiar with the subject on which he speaks, we may trust his explanations and rely on his words with implicit confidence.

II. The next thing which calls for notice is **THE MEASURE**, with which the angel measured the city. It was a reed, or rod, similar to those which are often mentioned in the Scriptures, and which are yet in common use among men. But it was a golden reed. He who carried it was an angel, a holy one; and it was fitting that the instrument which he employs should be of no common material. The city which was to be measured was brilliant with all manner of precious stones and richest workmanship; and it was fitting that the measuring reed should be in keeping with the city to be measured. This is all that is meant by this part of the symbol. All parts of the vision are in beautiful harmony. The golden reed was suited to the personage who uses it and to the occasion on which it was used. With his golden reed, the holy angel measures the city, and its gates, and its wall; and in the following verses we have the result of his measurement.

III. **THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY** is described in these words: "The city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth." Before we proceed to speak particularly of this plan and the angel's measurement, it may be well to ask and answer, if we can, the questions: Why was this measurement made? What is its meaning? What does this part of the symbol shadow forth? We have had occasion more than once in our expositions to point out the similarity between the imagery of this book and the imagery employed in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. This measurement of the New Jerusalem must remind us of that vision which is recorded in the concluding chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel. In that vision, the prophet saw a city, even Jerusalem; he saw the holy temple, with its court, and its altars, and its furniture. Under the divine direction, he measured and described that city and its temple to the smallest part. There can be no doubt as to the reason of this vision. The children of Israel were then in captivity. For years they had waited and longed for the promised restoration, but that restoration seemed no nearer now than when their captivity began. They were beginning to despair. They were beginning to think that they were never again to see the land and the graves of their fathers, and that mountain and temple which the God of their fathers loved so well. They were beginning to think that Zion was to be a perpetual desolation, and that their sanctuary would ever be a heap of ruins. To inspire them with comfort and hope in their sorrow, that vision was vouchsafed to their prophet. He was permitted to see the city of their solemnities and the temple in which they

were yet to worship. He was commanded to measure that city and temple, even to the smallest part, and to record the result of the measurement, so that the captive Israelites might be assured that the promises of God concerning them would be fulfilled. After reading the minute measurement and description of the prophet, they could feel, even with their weak and discouraged faith, that their city and temple were just as certain as if they were already builded. And if we mistake not, this angelic measurement of the New Jerusalem is for the same purpose. We are yet in distant banishment from our heavenly home. The days and years of our sinful captivity are slowly wearing away, and our waiting hearts are sick with unsatisfied longings. It is true, God has promised us a heavenly home, but there are no outward signs, at least we think there are no outward signs, that this promise will be fulfilled. We are ready to give up in despair. We are ready to lie down beside our unfinished tasks in the wilderness and die. But, lo! an angel comes forth with his golden reed, and the city stands before us. Our weak faith is strengthened. Our fainting hopes are revived, and we look with confidence for that heavenly city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. This is the great design of this measurement of the New Jerusalem. It is to strengthen our faith in our heavenly home. But there is another and secondary design. It is to show that this heavenly home is perfect in all its parts and in all its proportions. Though we may not be able to understand the full meaning of all the measurements, we are able to understand enough to assure us that that heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God, is as sure as if it was already builded, and perfectly adapted to all the wants of those for whom it is builded. With these thoughts in our mind, we may proceed with our explanations.

The city is in the form of a square. There is nothing irregular about it. Its walls are not crooked. There are no juttings out in one place, and no indentations in another. "The city lieth foursquare." What is the meaning of this part of the symbol? Perhaps the answer to this question does not lie upon the surface, but a little reflection will make it plain. Think for a moment of the cities with which we are now familiar. They are builded at different times, and their plans are modified by circumstances. The founders of cities have not, for the most part, looked far enough into the future. Their cities have grown beyond their greatest expectations. The original plan, if there was one, has been altered and enlarged again and again. One part has been joined to another as the necessities of the case required, and the result is that there is no regularity. And in some cases the founders of cities have been deceived by their hopes. They have prepared plans which have never been realized; they have laid out streets which have never been built up; instead of a city there is only a village, which stands as a monument of the folly of its builders and of the vanity of human

expectations. Compare all this with the New Jerusalem. Its plan was laid down at the very beginning, and that plan has never been changed. Not a street has been surveyed, not a house has been builded which was not in the original design. It has not grown beyond the expectations of its founder. The lapse of years has not made it necessary to enlarge its walls and to take in additional territory. In one word, it stands for ever in strict accordance with the original plan of its divine builder. Or, if we transfer our thoughts from the symbol to the things symbolized, the meaning is, the heavenly church will be just what God from all eternity intended it to be. There will not one soul enter heaven which God did not intend to save, and for which he has not made provision. There will not one soul fail to enter heaven which God intended to save, and for which he made provision. In that better country there will not be a white robe without one to wear it, or a golden crown without a brow on which to place it, or a royal throne without a king to sit on it; nor will there a single one come seeking robes, and crowns, and thrones, for whom these things have not been prepared. Let us, if we can, grasp this sublime thought, which is hard to grasp because of the uncertainty which attends human affairs, and the changes which are continually made in human plans. The city of the New Jerusalem is not to be the outgrowth of circumstances, but in accordance with an eternal and unchangeable plan. "The city lieth foursquare." And this symbolic language but expresses a truth which is revealed in many places in the word of God, in such passages as these: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus."

IV. In the next place, we have THE SIZE OF THE CITY. "He measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs." As a mile is eight furlongs, the city would be fifteen hundred miles in circumference; or each side of it would be three hundred and seventy-five miles in length. In comparison with this city, how insignificant are the cities on earth, even the greatest cities which man has ever builded! The size of this city must overturn the theory of those literalists who suppose that the things described in this chapter are to have their locality in the land of Palestine, for the boundaries of such a city would stretch far beyond the narrow limits of the promised Canaan. However, these dimensions are not to be understood literally. Twelve, as we have had occasion to show, and as should always be remembered in the study of this book, is the number of heavenly completeness. Hence the twelve gates, the twelve sentinels, the twelve foundations, the twelve tribes, and the twelve thousand furlongs. The meaning is, that the city, which measures twelve thousand furlongs, will be complete. It will be large enough to contain all its chosen inhabit-

ants. No one will be crowded out. No colonies will be compelled to find a home elsewhere, because the place is too strait for them. Within the compass of the twelve thousand furlongs, there will be room enough for all the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. This is the idea which this representation reveals to us of heaven. The home of the redeemed is to be on the most magnificent scale and with the largest proportions.

V. In the next place, we have **THE HEIGHT OF THE CITY**. "The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal." According to this representation the height of the city, not of the walls, which are measured afterwards, is to be the same as its length—that is, three hundred and seventy-five miles. This part of the symbol we find it hard to realize. The height seems to be out of all proper proportion when compared with the other dimensions. What was the symbol as it appeared before the eyes of the apostle? Did the palaces of this city, like the hanging gardens of Babylon, rise, story above story, until they pierced the clouds? Though it is not an unusual thing for the height of our houses to equal and even surpass their other dimensions, we cannot think this to be the figure here. Let us walk about the old Zion, and compass the walls of the old Jerusalem, and see if we can discover nothing which will help us to understand the vision. We stand in the valley of the son of Hinnom, on the southwest of the city. We look up the steep sides of the mountain, one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet, and away at the top the walls of the city are builded. From where we stand to the top of the wall is a giddy distance; and when the Saviour was tempted to cast himself down from that highest pinnacle—if this is the scene of that terrible temptation, as some have supposed—it is no wonder that he said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." To us, standing in the valley and straining our eyes to catch glimpses of the turrets on the walls, there does not seem to be so much difference between the height and the breadth of the old Jerusalem. In this description of the city of David is to be found the key to the symbol before us. The holy city is builded upon a great and high mountain which towers far towards heaven; and on the top of this mountain the walls of this city stand, and its golden palaces glisten in the clear sunlight of heaven. So high is this mountain, that to the wondering apostle the length, and the breadth, and the height of it seem to be equal. What is the meaning of this part of the symbol? Every one acquainted with the location of ancient cities can answer this question without hesitation. Why was Jerusalem builded on the summit of mount Zion? Why were other cities builded in places not easily accessible? It was that they might be more easily defended against their enemies. It was that they might be more safe from every attack. So the city of the New Jerusalem is represented as being on a great and high mountain, to assure us of its everlasting safety. No

foe can scale its walls, or force an entrance through its gates. Those who stand within and look over the lofty battlements need fear no ill. In these words, then, "The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal," the Spirit assures us of the safety of heaven.

VI. The same thought is presented for our encouragement in the next thing which claims our attention, viz., THE MEASUREMENT OF THE WALLS. "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel." The reference is of course to the height of the wall, for its length would correspond to the extent of the city. Here again the mystical twelve, that number of heavenly completeness, appears, for the hundred and forty-four cubits are twelve times twelve. If a cubit is reckoned as eighteen inches, as it is usually reckoned in the measurement of the Jewish sanctuary, then this wall was two hundred and sixteen feet high. And while this, literally understood, is a great height, it is not without a parallel in earthly architecture. The walls of Babylon, so Herodotus tells us, were three hundred and fifty feet high. Such a wall as is here described, builded on the top of a great and high mountain, gives the idea of security against every possible attack. To express this thought, viz., the eternal safety of the inhabitants of heaven, human language is employed, and human measurements are used; for the measure which the angel employed was the measure of men; that is, the measure commonly used among men. We could not understand any other. If the angel had described heaven as it really is, we still would have been ignorant; his discourse would have been as the discourse of one talking in an unknown tongue. But the Spirit of inspiration knew our weakness, and he employed figures we are in some measure able to understand. Gathering up these figures in our mind, what a sense of security do they impart! Heaven is a city, builded on a great and high mountain, up whose lofty and inaccessible sides no hostile army can climb. It is surrounded by towering walls and frowning battlements which no artillery can reach or injure. If it is our high privilege to ascend that mountain and to stand behind those walls, there will fill our souls such a sense of safety as we have never felt on earth, though we are now surrounded by the unalterable promises and defended by the omnipotent power of God.

VII. But there is to be BEAUTY as well as strength in the New Jerusalem. This thought is in the next verse presented for our consideration. "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass." Precious stones are employed, to give us some idea of the beauty of the wall; the most precious metal is employed, to give us some idea of the beauty of the city itself. How beautiful must that wall be which is of jasper! How beautiful must that city be which is



of purest gold! But the gold of which the city was builded was something different from the gold with which we are familiar, and something better. It was like clear glass. The golden city would be so bright that it would seem to be glass reflecting the sunbeams. Sometimes we have stood in the neighborhood of some magnificent building as the sun was going down, and have seen his rays reflected from the many windows. It seemed as if the building was one mass of glowing fire. It seemed as if it was builded of burnished and glittering gold. In some such way as this, the heavenly city burst upon the vision of the wondering apostle. It was radiant with the glory of God. It dazzled his eyes as it reflected the beams of the sun of righteousness. He could compare it to nothing earthly, save to a city of gold, and jasper, and glass. We cannot fully appreciate this description. It surpasses the wildest flight of our imagination. Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God has prepared for them that love him. Even here we long for beauty, and our longings are in some measure satisfied. Howbeit, all beauty on earth is mingled with deformity and imperfection. When we enter heaven and stand within those jasper walls, and in the midst of that city of gold and glass, then, for the first time, will we see beauty without a stain.

The security and beauty of this holy city, which is a symbol of heaven, are still further described in the next verses. "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcodony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprassus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst." It would be useless to attempt to identify these precious stones. They are mentioned by name, but some of these names are so obscure, and some were so loosely applied in ancient times, that it would be a waste of time to try to discover what names in modern language correspond with jasper, sapphire, chalcodony, and all the rest. It will be sufficient for us to grasp the general idea which the Spirit intended to convey. That idea is plain enough. Foundations of such precious stones can never be weakened or destroyed by the lapse of time. Such foundations are beautiful, for the precious stones of which they are builded are among the most beautiful objects with which we are familiar. If the foundations, which are ever the most unsightly parts of an edifice, are so beautiful, how much more beautiful must be the city itself!

The security and beauty of this holy city are still further described in the verse which concludes the subject of the present lecture. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Of these twelve gates, three on each side of the city, each one guarded by an

angel sentinel, we have already spoken. We have shown that this part of the symbol shadows forth the fact, that when the saints of God are gathered from all the lands to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they will find free access to their heavenly home. The only additional idea presented here is that each gate is a single pearl. This part of the description, like those we have just considered, is designed to impress us with the beauty of the city. We have also spoken of the gold of the city, which was like transparent glass. The apostle refers to this feature of the New Jerusalem again and again, for it made a powerful impression upon his mind. The very streets of the heavenly city glistened like gold, not the tarnished gold of earth, but the pure gold of the better land.

These are the three thoughts which are prominently brought to our notice in the verses we have been considering, viz., the extent, the security, and the beauty of heaven. We have come far short in our conception and our description. Who that is familiar only with this world, and with the church in this world, can understand the extent of that city, which is measured by twelve thousand heavenly furlongs? Who can understand the security of that city, which is builded on such a mountain and surrounded by such battlements? Who can understand the beauty of that city, which has such a wall, and such foundations, and such gates? But what we know not now, we may hope to know hereafter. The way to this city lieth before our pilgrim feet. It is the way of faith and obedience, the way pointed out by the cross of Christ, the way, strait and narrow, yet trodden by the noblest and best of men. The rewards of the future, the love of God, and the blood of the covenant beckon us on. Beyond the narrowness and the dangers and the sins of the present, beyond the wilderness and the Sinai and the Jordan, there is waiting a land of Canaan, the city of the Great King, whose extent, security and beauty surpass all human hopes, whose walls are of jasper, whose foundations are of precious stones, whose streets are of gold, and whose gates are of pearl. Would we have this city for our home? Would we stand within these walls? Would we be for ever ravished by this beauty? Then our way is plain; our duty is expressed in these words, which have more than human or angelic sanction, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; for start where we will, from man's lost condition, from his present need, or from his future glory, we ever come to this great central revelation of divine love and human duty, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."

## LECTURE LXVIII.

## THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.—REV. 21 : 22, 23.

As John looked upon the New Jerusalem, which was the symbol of heaven, and as he followed the angel in his measurement of the holy city, he saw much which filled him with wonder and astonishment. He saw the peerless beauty of the city, which was as a bride adorned for her husband. He saw its sorrowless inhabitants, from whose eyes the Father's hand had wiped away every tear. He saw the streets of gold, and the gates of pearl, and the walls of precious stones. He saw all this, and many other things connected with the symbolical city, which were so different from anything with which he was familiar in the earthly state, that he must have marveled above measure at what God had prepared for them that love him. But there was no marvel equal to the one which is now brought to our notice. "I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." These words startle us by their unexpectedness. Familiar as we are with places of worship in the present dispensation, conscious as we are from a life-long experience of their necessity to our spiritual growth and happiness, we are not prepared to appreciate a dispensation in which places of peculiar sacredness will be unknown. No temple in heaven ! This revelation seems like an unsightly gap in a perfect landscape ; like a threatening cloud in a radiant sky ; like a grating discord in the heavenly music. Yet a little reflection will convince us that this is one of the brightest spots in the celestial landscape, and one of the sweetest chords in the celestial harmony. How holy must be that people which needs no temple in which to worship ! How heavenly must be that city, whose streets and homes are all alike consecrated to the service of God and of the Lamb !

In order to appreciate this revelation of heaven, we must remember what is made necessary on earth, both by divine appointment and by the requirements of our own imperfect natures. Here we need temples. Here we must have sacred places, in which we may, with various helps, shut out the noise and temptations of the world. In all the dispensations there have been such temples. In the patriarchal dispensation, the fathers built their altars, and around their altars they gathered their families for worship, and held their sweetest communion with their God. In the Jewish dispensation, there was first the tabernacle and then the temple, in which the tribes were

commanded to meet at certain seasons, and in which the most solemn rites of their holy religion had to be observed, rites which could not be observed elsewhere without sin. In the Christian dispensation, there is a great change in the manner and places of worship. The time has now come when men may worship the Father, not merely in Jerusalem, or on mount Gerisim, but wherever true worshipers may meet in spirit and truth. Still, Christian temples are a necessity. The formal worship which God requires cannot be performed in any place. Some places are dedicated to mammon. In some, pleasure holds high carnival. Still others are filled with the bustle of business. We know ourselves too well, we know how easily our attention is diverted by surrounding circumstances, to think that we can, without distraction, give to God formal worship where we must hear the click of gold or the rustle of bonds, the merry song of gaiety or the wild orgies of dissipation, the din of business or the discordant voices of commerce. We must retire from the world; we must enter our sanctuaries, whose doors shut out the sights and sounds of daily life; and even then we find it difficult to worship our God with singleness of purpose. But when the fullness of time has come, and the present dispensation will give place to the heavenly, all this will be changed. In heaven there will be no temple, in which either the friends or foes of God will meet for conference or worship. There will be no infidel temple, for then all will know the Lord from the least to the greatest, and the truth will not be overshadowed by a single doubt. There will be no Mohammedan temple, or idol shrine, for the followers of the false prophet will be shut up in their prison of darkness, and all idols and their worshipers will be destroyed. There will be no Jewish temple, for there will be no sacrifices to offer, and all distinction between the circumcision and the uncircumcision will have passed away. There will be no denominational temple, for in the clear light of eternity, all the redeemed will see eye to eye, and all creeds and confessions will be blended into one harmonious whole. There will be no Sabbath, binding together with its golden hours all the days of the week. Every day will be a Sabbath, and all time will be a season of worship. There will be no preaching of the gospel, for all will know even as they are known. No man will need to teach his brother, for all will be taught of God. There will be no prayer like that with which we are familiar on earth. There will be no shortcomings in duty, and therefore no confessions to make. There will be no transgressions, and therefore no penitence to express. There will be no wants, and therefore no petitions to offer. There will be no hope, for every hope will be realized. There will be no faith, as this term is now understood, for faith will be swallowed up in actual fruition. All this, and more than this, is expressed by the revelation, that there will be no temple in heaven. We therefore repeat it, how holy must be that people which needs no temple in which to worship! How

heavenly must be that city whose streets and homes are all alike consecrated to the service of God and the Lamb !

There is no necessity for a temple in heaven. There all places will be equally holy, and equally near to God. There will be nothing in his surroundings to disturb the worshiper, and he will not need the help of sacred associations, and fitting services, and holy places to keep his mind fixed on God. There God will be everywhere present. His visible presence will shine in all the city. This is not the case on the earth. In the old dispensation, God specially manifested himself in his temple. Here was the place where God delighted to dwell. Here was the place where the Shechinah abode and from which it shone. Here was the place where the divine glory was to be seen. If the Israelites desired to see the glory of God, and to enjoy the light of his visible presence, they were not to go to the Red sea, though its waters were once frightened into heaps by his glorious presence ; they were not to go to mount Sínai, though it once burned like glowing coals beneath his feet ; they were not to go to the Jordan, though its waves once fled back before the presence of God ; they were not to go to Lebanon, with its snows and its cedars, or to the plain of Esdraelon, with its harvest and its memories ; they were to go to the temple in Jerusalem, for there alone the Lord was pleased to manifest his special presence. So in the new dispensation, if we would see special revelations of the divine glory in the conversion and sanctification of souls, we must visit, not the forest or the field, not the market place or the forum, not the workshop or the school-room, but the Christian church, the place where prayer is wont to be made. There God has promised to meet with his people, and there, if past history is to be believed, he has met with them. But in the New Jerusalem God's visible presence will not be confined to any particular spot or temple. It will fill the whole city, from the centre to the remotest corner of its jasper walls. Let the glorified saints stand wherever they may, by any one of the twelve gates, on the north, or the south, or the east, or the west of the foursquare city, on the crystal sea, or on the banks of the river of the water of life, God will be with them, just as he was with his people in the ancient temple, and even more gloriously. This is what is meant when it is said, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

All this plainly implies that temples are needed here. Sinners need temples. They require to be arrested and aroused, to be convicted and instructed ; and the experience of centuries has shown that there is nothing so powerful in this direction as the faithful preaching of the gospel in places of Christian worship. Saints need temples. They are the flowers of God's own planting ; they are branches of the vine, and they must have the dew, and the rain, and the sunshine of heaven, or they will wither and die. And the experience of centuries has shown that it is in places of Christian worship that these heavenly influences are specially felt. It was no en-

tranced enthusiast, but holy David who said, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the courts of wickedness." There is not one on earth, whatever be his age or condition, who does not need a temple. But when we enter heaven, if, through divine grace, this exalted privilege will ever be ours, this need will be done away for ever. There will be no sinful world to keep out, and no wandering thoughts to keep in. The unbroken calm of a perpetual Sabbath will fill every heart, and the visible presence of God will be seen in every part of the better land.

The parts of this description of heaven come home with different power to different hearts. There are those who cherish with special love and longing the thought that there "God will wipe away all tears from their eyes." There are those who ever meditate upon the safety which is shadowed forth by those lofty and imperishable walls. There are those who find their greatest comfort in anticipating the perpetual presence of God. But none of these revelations of heaven has taken so strong a hold on my mind as the one before us. "No temple in heaven." What holiness does this reveal on the part of its inhabitants! What condescension on the part of God! What happiness does it shadow forth, for go where we will we will not go beyond the divine presence! What unwearied worship does it describe, for all place will be a temple, all time will be a Sabbath, and all sounds will be praise! Then let us, among these revelations of heaven, give prominence to this: "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

And as there will be no temple in the New Jerusalem, so there will be no sun, and for the same reason; it will not be needed. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This thought was once before presented to our notice. In verse 11 we are told that this holy Jerusalem which came down from God out of heaven "had the glory of God: and her light," or rather her luminary, "was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." In this verse, as well as in the verse before us, the idea is that the glory of God will shine so brightly in the New Jerusalem that no other luminary will be needed. Though this idea has been discussed in another lecture, we cannot pass it over in silence now, for the Spirit of inspiration has thought it important enough to receive a second mention. In order to understand this feature of the heavenly state, we must remember how the visible presence of God has manifested itself in the past history of the church. For information on this point, we must turn to the word of God. The word of God tells us that now and then the presence of God has been manifested on

earth, though on account of human weakness that presence has been so veiled that only a part of its glory could appear. When Moses was in the wilderness, he saw a brilliant light in the burning bush, and that brilliant light, which dazzled his eyes and made his heart quake with fear, revealed the presence of God. When the Israelites encamped at the foot of Sinai, they saw the summit of the mountain enveloped with clouds and darkness, and through the clouds and darkness they saw a brilliant light, like vivid flashes of lightning, and that brilliant light revealed the presence of God. So the brilliant light, which guided the tribes through the wilderness as a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day, revealed the presence of God. So that brilliant light, which filled the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, ever emanating from the mercy-seat, where the Shechinah abode, revealed the presence of God. And so, not to multiply instances, that brilliant light, which blinded Paul at the gate of Damascus, and which far exceeded the brightness of the noonday sun, revealed the presence of God. But all these revelations of divine glory have been partial and incomplete, for such partial and incomplete revelations were all that man could endure. In the heavenly state, we who lived in weakness on the earth will be raised in power. Then the presence of God will manifest itself, not partially, but fully; not now and then, but continually; for the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell with them. Then that brilliant light, indicating the divine presence, which Moses saw in the burning bush, which the Israelites saw on the summit of smoking Sinai and in the pillar of fire, which the high priest saw illuminating the most holy place, and which Paul saw on his way to Damascus, will become sevenfold more brilliant, and will shine out with such brightness that sun, moon and stars will be eclipsed for ever. This is what is meant by the words under consideration. In heaven, God's visible presence will ever be seen, and that visible presence will manifest itself in such glorious light as will illumine the whole city. In other words, the glory of God, shining in the Lamb, who is the brightness of the Father's person, will be the luminary of the New Jerusalem.

This luminary will make plain many things which were dark before; it will throw light upon many things which were obscure before. There are doctrines of revelation, whose full comprehension are far beyond our reach. We believe them, not because we can understand them, but because they are doctrines of revelation. There is the doctrine of the eternal election of the saints, the sovereign choice of God. We believe it, because God has said, "I have chosen you; ye have not chosen me." There is the doctrine of the freedom of the human will. We believe it, not only because we are conscious of our freedom, but because God has said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." If we attempt to reconcile these doctrines, we are involved in mystery. When, in the heavenly state, the glory of God

will shine all around us and within us, and we will know even as we are known, we will understand how God has chosen us from before the foundation of the world, and how this choice is consistent with the freedom of the human will. So with the imperfect light of the present, we cannot fully harmonize the doctrines of free grace and good works; but in the light of the hereafter all this will be made plain. So with those other matters of doctrine which now trouble us. When the glory of God shines upon them and us, every difficulty will disappear. And as it is with doctrines, so it is with providences. There are no greater mysteries than those which are connected with God's providential dealings with his people. The reasons of the sicknesses, the disappointments and the bereavements which befall us here are shrouded in darkness. We ask ourselves, why was this sorrow or this trial sent? But a satisfactory answer is beyond our reach. When the glory of God shines upon these providences, and upon us, every difficulty will disappear. We will know the reason of every tear we shed, and of every pain we felt. Then will be fulfilled these words of the Master, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

This luminary, whose rays evermore lighten the celestial city, will increase our happiness. We do not know now what it is to walk in the light of God's countenance. It is true, we have had some experience of the joy which flows from this source; we have had some experience of the agony which comes from the darkening of the paternal presence; but as yet, we comprehend neither the joy nor the agony. If we did, our joy would be tenfold greater, and our agony tenfold deeper than it is. When we enter heaven and learn from sweet experience what it is to live in the light of God's visible presence, it will be a source of unceasing wonder that we cared so little about God's presence while we were on earth.

This is another characteristic of the celestial city, which should stand in our meditations beside the other characteristics which have occupied our attention. The visible presence of God will be its light, and in that light the glorified saints will rejoice.

These verses suggest some practical thoughts. In heaven there will be neither temple nor sun, for the Lord will be its temple and its light. We hope to enter heaven, for all expect at last to be saved. Are we prepared to enter heaven? There will be, without doubt, a great change at the hour of death. There will be a change in our appearance, in the place of our residence, in our joys, and in many a thing beside; but, after all, this change may not be as radical as we expect. Heaven is only a place where God's saints are completely glorified. The church in heaven is only the church on earth wholly sanctified. Glory is only grace perfected. We have seen in the revelation of heaven, which has passed in review before us, that there is to be no temple in heaven, and that all parts of it, filled with the presence of God and the Lamb, are to be holier than the holiest



temple the earth ever knew. If we do not find delight in the earthly sanctuary, how can we hope to find delight in that better country which is one great temple? We have seen, in this revelation, that there is to be no stated Sabbath in heaven; all time is to be holy time; and if we have no pleasure in the Sabbath here, how can we expect to have pleasure in the Sabbath which never ends? We have seen that there is to be no sun in heaven; that the glory of God is to be the luminary of that better country; and if we find no enjoyment in the communion of God here, how can we hope to find enjoyment in the communion of God in the New Jerusalem? In view of these things, we do well to ask ourselves, are we prepared for heaven? Are we, through divine grace, cultivating our love for the sanctuary, and for the Sabbath, and for communion with God? If so, we have a right to hope that we will find our unending happiness in that city in which there is no temple, no Sabbath, and no sun; but in which all places will be holy places, and all times holy times, and all light the holy radiance of God's presence. To stimulate in this preparation for glory, let these words of sublime description abide in our memory, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

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## LECTURE LXIX.

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### THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.—REV. 21: 24, 25.

IF we live and die in entire ignorance of what God has prepared for them that love him, we ourselves must be to blame. The more we study this description of the New Jerusalem, and the better we understand it, the more we wonder at its vividness and fullness. No traveler ever described the land which he was visiting, or the city in which he was living, more minutely than the apostle describes this holy city, which, by divine appointment, was a symbol of the heavenly state. Its appearance, its inhabitants, its dimensions, the materials of which it is builded, its holiness, and its glorious luminary, have all been brought to our notice in the sublime words which have engaged our attention. If nothing else was told

us, we have learned enough to give us a very clear idea of what heaven is, and to create in our hearts earnest longings for that heavenly inheritance. But we have not yet reached the end of the inspired description. There are other characteristics of the heavenly state, no less sublime, no less comforting, and no less inspiring, than those which have already been considered. In the subject of the present lecture, we have a revelation of the multitude of heaven's inhabitants, of its open gates, and of its endless day.

I. Let us notice **THE MULTITUDE OF HEAVEN'S INHABITANTS**. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." These words reveal not only the multitude of heaven's inhabitants, but also the fact that they are gathered from all nations, ranks and conditions of men. Whole nations of the saved shall be there, and kings shall stand side by side with their subjects in the worship of that heavenly sanctuary.

The first thing which claims our attention in this description of the inhabitants of heaven is that they are "of them which are saved." Who are the saved? This is a word whose full meaning we are not yet able to understand; for the one term *salvation* describes not only the earthly happiness of those who are in Christ, but also their eternal glory. It is only when we have enjoyed that happiness to the full, and have entered upon that glory, that we will know what salvation means. Still, we are not entirely ignorant. The saved are those who are delivered from the condemnation of Satan, and from the guilt and punishment of sin; they are those who are reconciled to God and are admitted to his friendship; they are those who have laid aside the last vestiges of the earthly imperfections and have put on the completeness of the heavenly glory. Even now and here, we speak of the joys of salvation, but it is only a partial salvation on this side of the grave. The good work has only begun in us, though we may be "confident of this very thing, that he who has begun the good work in us will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus." Even now and here, we speak of the saved, but it is only by anticipation. The saved, the fully and completely saved, are those who have entered their heavenly home. And this word, *saved*, which describes the inhabitants of heaven, shows the relation which exists between the church in heaven and the church on earth. The true members of the earthly church are described by such language as this: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"; "the Lord added unto the church daily such as should be saved." The members of the heavenly church are described by such language as that before us: "the nations of them that are saved." No one, therefore, has a right to expect to belong to the church in heaven, unless he belongs to the church on earth; for they are one. No one has a

right to expect that he will belong to the saved hereafter, unless the work of salvation is begun in his soul here.

"Are there few that be saved"? This question, which was first asked by the disciples during the incarnation, has been asked again and again since that day. The Lord's answer was this: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." This answer, as well as the similar words, "many are called, but few are chosen," certainly teach that at that time, while many were walking in the broad way of death, only a few were walking in the narrow way of life. Our observation must convince us that this is the case to this very day. Of all the nations of the world, only a few are even nominally Christian; and even in nominal Christian nations only a few are thoroughly leavened with the gospel. Even in the most enlightened Christian lands, how few there are who are true members of the church, and how many there are who are as far from salvation as the worshipers of idols! When the millennium comes, and all the glorious promises of God are fulfilled, all this will be changed. Then the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, and all men will know the Lord, from the least even to the greatest. And when the end comes, and all the saved are brought to their heavenly home, they will be a mighty multitude which no man can number, and which is described in the words under consideration as "nations of them which are saved."

These words not only indicate the great multitude of the saved, but also the fact that they are called from all nations. The same fact is brought to our attention again and again in this book. We are told so often that the heavenly congregation is composed of all kindreds, and peoples, and nations, that we cannot forget it. The past history of redemption will help us to understand this feature of the heavenly state. Under the Jewish dispensation the offers of salvation were for the most part confined to the children of faithful Abraham. When Christ came the middle wall of partition was broken down, and all distinction between the circumcision and the uncircumcision was removed. The apostles went forth offering salvation, not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles as well. This great work has been going on through all the centuries of the Christian era, until there is not perhaps a nation under the whole heaven which has not heard of Christ and his sacrifice. Some of these nations have paid little heed to what they have heard; others have forgotten the gospel which was preached unto them. Still, some have been saved from nearly all the nations of the earth. It is, however, during the millennial period of the world's history, that the great harvest is to be gathered. Then all kingdoms are to become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. When this great harvest will be gathered home, all nations will be represented. All continents, and all islands of the sea, all cities and all hamlets, all languages and all dialects, will help to swell the redeemed throng, which may be described not only

by the words, "the nations of the saved," but also by the other words, "the saved of all the nations."

There is an other fact revealed by the words under consideration which must not be passed over in silence. This multitude of saved ones will be composed of men of all ranks and conditions. We have seen that men of all nations will walk in the light of that holy city; but we are also told that "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." Up to this hour, not many mighty, not many noble, not many wise, have been called. Without any controversy, there have been Christian rulers, and statesmen, and philosophers, but they have been comparatively few. They are exceptions to the general rule. Great wealth and exalted station are so compassed about with temptations, that only now and then one has sufficient strength and grace to resist them unharmed. If the word of God is to be believed, this will not continue for ever. In that better time of which the prophets have spoken in such glowing language, the princes of the world will be peace and its governors righteousness; kings will be the nursing fathers of the church, and queens will be its nursing mothers. The saints are to sit on the thrones of earth; all judgment is to be given unto them; they are to reign with Christ. When all the redeemed are brought home, kings and queens, nobles and princes, will be found among the ransomed throng, as well as the poor and the lowly, who have up to this hour constituted the vast majority of those who have accepted the offers of salvation.

These are the three ideas which are prominently brought out in the first part of the subject of the lecture: The inhabitants of heaven will constitute a mighty multitude, for there will be whole nations of the saved. They will be gathered from all parts of the world, for they will be the saved of all the nations. They will be gathered from all ranks and conditions of men, for there will be kings as well as nations walking in the light of the heavenly city. We need not then be afraid that there will be no room for us in heaven. In that city, with its mighty multitude of inhabitants, we certainly can find a place. We need not be afraid of exclusion because of our earthly condition, or because of the station we occupy, for the highest kings as well as their lowliest subjects will stand and worship side by side. The only question which need give rise to any anxiety or fear is, are we among the saved? None but the saved will pass through the gates into the city, and salvation must begin in the present life. There is but one way by which the celestial city can be reached, and that is, the strait and narrow way of salvation. There is but one way by which we can enter that strait and narrow way, and that is, faith in the Lord Jesus. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "The nations of the saved shall walk in the light of it." Thus has God joined together faith on earth and glory in heaven, and they cannot be separated. This is the

divine arrangement which can never be violated. This is the divine rule to which there is no exception. First faith, then salvation, then glory.

II. We turn now to THE OPEN GATES of the city. "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day." As we are told in the latter clause of the verse that there shall be no night there, we must infer that the gates will never be shut. Of similar import is the language of Isaiah, in which he describes the future glory of the church: "Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night." In order to understand the meaning of this part of the symbol, we must refer to the customs of ancient days, and to the use of the walls and gates which inclosed ancient cities. Lofty walls and strongly barred gates were the great defences of antiquity. On account of the weakness of the weapons of offensive warfare, a city which had such walls and such gates was comparatively safe. Therefore, when an enemy approached, the gates were shut and barred. When the darkness of evening was drawing on, under cover of which a lurking enemy might enter the city, the gates were shut and barred. The shutting of the gates was a sign of possible danger or of the actual presence of an enemy. If, then, the gates of any city were shut, we would conclude that the enemies of that city were actually engaged in war against it, or that there was some other probable danger. If the gates of any city were open, we would conclude that no enemy was approaching, and that there was no probable danger. Remembering this, we will have no difficulty in understanding the symbol before us. The open gates of the New Jerusalem shadow forth the fact that there was no danger. The church on earth is surrounded by a multitude of dangers—dangers so many that the walls of Zion have to be guarded by a host of watchmen; but the church in heaven is so far removed from all possible danger, that the watchmen may come down from its walls and its gates may stand open continually. The church on earth is surrounded by many enemies, and there is not a day or an hour in which these enemies do not attack some of the doctrines or members of the church. Therefore, the church on earth is in a state of perpetual warfare. The earthly church must ever keep its gates shut and its walls in good repair; its citizens must ever keep on their spiritual armor; for at any hour and at any place Satan may lead his legions to a new assault. But when the heavenly is come, all this will be changed. Every enemy will then be destroyed. Satan and his legions will be powerless in their prison of darkness. The Christian's last battle will be fought; his last victory will be won; his armor may be laid aside, and the gates of the heavenly city may stand open continually.

The open gates not only shadow forth the absence of all danger and the destruction of all enemies, but also the perfect freedom of the inhabitants of the city. They can go in and out at their pleasure. When they come

from the north, south, east and west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of their Father, the gates will be wide open to receive them. If they would go out to view the towering walls of jasper, or to visit other parts of God's universal dominion on errands of mercy, for it may be that such errands of mercy are a part of their eternal felicity, the gates will be open wide for their departure. There will be free ingress and free egress to and from the New Jerusalem. Its gates will never be shut.

This is the threefold meaning of this part of the symbol: The absence of all danger, the destruction of all enemies, and the perfect freedom of all the redeemed are shadowed forth by the words, "the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day."

III. We must now notice THE ENDLESS DAY of the heavenly city. "For there shall be no night there." No feature of the heavenly state indicates more clearly than this, the marvelous change which is to be wrought in us. Night is one of our greatest temporal blessings. When we are weary and worn with the labors of the day, we look forward with gladness to the coming of the evening and to the sleep and rest which its darkness brings to our tired bodies. "No night" here would soon put an end to our work and to our usefulness. "No night" here would speedily undermine our strength, our health, and our life. But a little reflection will convince us that that which would be the greatest calamity in our present state will be the greatest blessing in the future state.

Night is now associated with fatigue. The body, exhausted with labor, regains its wasted energies through the repose of the night. The mind, which is just as liable to weariness as the body, its grosser companion, and which needs rest just as much, is refreshed by quiet slumber, and prepared for new excursions in the wide realms of thought. But in the New Jerusalem no such fatigue will be experienced, and no such rest will be needed. The resurrection body will throb with untiring vigor. That which was sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption; that which was sown in weakness will be raised in power. These vile bodies, fashioned like Christ's glorious body, will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint. And the spirit will be willing while the body will not be weak. The mind will be so strong, that the most difficult problems and the most intense application will not exhaust it. The saints in heaven never rest, either in body or in mind, for there is no night there.

Night is now associated with insecurity and danger. Under the cover of the darkness of the night, the assassin makes his attack, and the thief breaks through and steals. We feel that during the darkness of the night, our persons and our property must be most carefully secured against those who set human law at defiance. But in the New Jerusalem no man of blood

will lie in wait for his victim, no thief will covet that which belongs to another, no violator of law will watch for his prey. There will be no mantle of darkness under which the doers of evil may hide themselves; there will be no insecurity or danger to disturb the saints with anxious thoughts; for there will be no night there.

Night is a symbol of ignorance. In the darkness, men stumble over every obstacle; they fall into every pit; they mistake friends for foes and foes for friends; they can see no difference between beauty and deformity. Therefore, night is an appropriate symbol of ignorance. It requires no argument to prove that we are now in comparative ignorance. We are continually stumbling over the providences of God, falling into the pits which Satan has dug, mistaking good for evil and evil for good. Too often, we can see no difference between the beauty of holiness and the deformity of sin. We are too ignorant to understand either the words or works of God. From the cradle to the grave, we are walking in the darkness of a spiritual night, and though a few rays of light penetrate the gloom, the darkness is not entirely removed till at last we stumble into our sepulchers. But in the New Jerusalem the ignorance which is so appropriately symbolized by darkness will disappear. Then we will know even as we are known. The wonders of creation will be understood. The mysteries of God's providential dealings will be made plain. The doctrines of revelation will all blend in beautiful harmony. The plan of redemption, which so long baffled the understanding of the angels, will be as clear as the sun at noonday. Our present ignorance and our future knowledge are thus described by the apostle Paul: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then we shall know even as also we are known." The same truths are announced in the symbolical language under consideration: "there shall be no night there."

Night is now associated with sin. Says the apostle, "They that be drunken are drunken in the night." The same assertion might be made with regard to many another sin. It is under the cover of the night that men throw off restraint and run wild riot with the beasts that perish. And night is a symbol of sin. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." But in the New Jerusalem there will be no drunkenness, or rioting, or chambering, or wantonness. There will be no night of sin there.

Night is now associated with death, and it is a symbol of death. The Saviour said, "The night cometh when no man can work"; and in these words he spake of death. In the Scriptures and in common conversation, death is often called a sleep. This symbolical night of death covers all the earth. It casts its dark shadow over the palace and the hovel, over city and country. It eclipses the brightness of the day, and gives a deeper gloom to the blackness of the night. However different different parts of

the world may be, there is one feature the same in every landscape; and that is, the house of the dead, which ever stands beside the house of the living; the city of the dead, which ever lies just beyond the city of the living. But in the New Jerusalem sicknesses, bereavements, burials and cemeteries will be unknown. Nothing is more clearly revealed than this: there will be no night of death there.

This is a part, at least, of what is shadowed forth by this symbol. The words, "no night there," tell us that there will be no fatigue, no insecurity, no ignorance, no death, and no sin in that better country, of which the heavenly Jerusalem was the divinely appointed symbol.

Before these echoes from the city of peerless beauty die away in our ears, let us take home to our hearts the consolations which they are well calculated to impart. The prospect of that city, with its ever open gates and its endless day, has comforted many a waiting saint. As they have seen from afar the approaching glories of the promised inheritance, they have smiled through their tears, and shouted alleluias in the midst of the greatest sufferings. One who had been in perils by land and perils by sea, and perils from every other source, exclaimed, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." On another occasion, the same apostle said, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Without controversy, his afflictions were heavy, but when placed in the scales with the eternal weight of glory, they were light. And so let us, for our comfort, have respect to the recompense of the reward. Comparing the dangers, the enemies, and the restraints of the present, with the safety and the freedom of that time when the gates will be open continually; comparing the fatigue, the ignorance, the sin, and the death of the present, with the vigor, the knowledge, the holiness, and the life which is symbolized by the endless day of the New Jerusalem, we too can say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." We, too, can bear our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, if so be that we are the heirs of heaven, for the gates of the city of our inheritance will never be shut against us.

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## LECTURE LXX.

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### THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defleth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.—REV. 21: 26, 27.



THE features of the New Jerusalem, which are brought to our notice in the subject of the present lecture, are the glory and honor of heaven, and the character of its inhabitants—two features which are worthy of a place beside those we have already considered.

I. We have THE GLORY AND HONOR OF HEAVEN. "And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it." A similar expression is to be found in verse 24: "The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." This expression, as already explained, describes the fact that kings and princes, as well as the poor and lowly, will have a place in the heavenly congregation. The expression before us describes the fact that all that is truly valuable among the nations of the earth will be found in heaven. All that is truly glorious and honorable here will be brought at last into the New Jerusalem. Of course, the glory and honor here spoken of are estimated from a heavenly, and not from an earthly standpoint. There are many things which the nations of the earth now count as a glory and honor, which are not. These things, no matter how high the estimation in which they are at present held, will have no place in heaven. The nations of the earth regard their standing armies as a glory and honor. They point with pride to the thousands they can put into the field at an hour's notice. When a king wishes to impress a royal visitor with the greatness of his kingdom, he takes him out to witness a review of his disciplined armies. But whatever these armies may be from an earthly standpoint, they are not a glory and honor from a heavenly standpoint. They are only an embodied confession of human ambition, injustice and sin; for if it was not for ambition, injustice and sin, there would be no armies. In the glory and honor which will be brought into the New Jerusalem armed legions will have no place, for long before the time described in this chapter men will forget to learn war, the sword will be beaten into the plowshare, and the spear into the pruning hook. The nations of the earth regard their navies as a glory and honor, and they point with pride to their sails which whiten every sea, and to their ships of war which command the respect of every people. These navies, like the standing armies, are only a confession of human ambition, injustice and sin; and in the New Jerusalem they will have no place, for long before the time described in this chapter, there will be no sea to be plowed by ships of war or to be stained with human blood. The nations of the earth regard their battles and victories as a glory and honor, and they point with pride to the histories in which these battles and victories are recorded; but these things are only a confession of human ambition, injustice and sin; and in the New Jerusalem they will have no place, for long before the time described in this chapter universal peace will fill and bless the universal kingdom of Christ. The nations of the earth regard

their public buildings, their reformatories, their hospitals and their churches as a glory and honor; but in the New Jerusalem these will have no place, for there there will be no criminals to need reformation, no sick to need the care of hospitals, and no need of churches, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb will be the temple of it.

What, then, is the true glory and honor of the nations which will at last be brought into the New Jerusalem? It is that only which is truly valuable, and which will endure after the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. One true glory of the nations is knowledge. "Knowledge exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." That kingdom in which general intelligence prevails has a right to be proud. And without controversy, knowledge will be a characteristic of the New Jerusalem. There men will no longer see through a glass darkly—they will know even as they are known. Another true glory of the nations is justice. This will be a characteristic of the New Jerusalem, for God will be its King, and the saints are to sit on the thrones of glory. Another true glory of the nations is holiness. This will be a characteristic of the New Jerusalem, for nothing that defileth will pass through the gates into the city. Another true glory of the nations is the honorable character of its citizens. This will be a characteristic of the New Jerusalem, for all its inhabitants will be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

When the time comes for the gathering of the general assembly of the first born, and God sends his angels to bring them from the north, south, east and west, armies and navies, hospitals and cathedrals, warriors and heroes will be overlooked and forgotten, and they will bring into it knowledge, justice and holiness, which are now, and ever have been, and ever must be, the glory and honor of the nations. This revelation is of great use in giving vividness to our conceptions of heaven. Take the history of the world in our hands. Glance over that history from the earliest ages till the present. Leave out of it everything that is hurtful and sinful. Leave in it everything that is glorious and honorable. Bring all that is glorious and honorable into one land, confer it upon one people, and what have we? We have universal knowledge, general peace, impartial justice, complete holiness, and unending prosperity and happiness. We have a heaven upon earth. When all these things will be brought to perfection, as they will be in the heavenly state, there will be that which is described in the words before us: "They shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it"; that is, everything that is valuable, and glorious, and honorable among the nations of the earth, will have a perpetual place and an eternal home in heaven.

II. In the last verse of the chapter, we have another description of THE CHARACTER OF THE INHABITANTS of heaven. "And there shall in

no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." This is not the first description of the glorified saints which the Spirit of inspiration has vouchsafed to us in this revelation of the hereafter. In one place we are told that they will be without sorrow; in another, that they will be fully satisfied and finally victorious, and the sons of God; in another, that they are the saved of all the nations. But the character of the inhabitants of heaven is a matter of so much importance that it is again and again forced upon our attention. In the words before us we are told, in the first place, who will not enter the heavenly city; and in the second place, who will enter it.

Who will not enter the heavenly city? "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Let it be particularly noted, and carefully remembered, that the disqualifications for the New Jerusalem, which are here pointed out, are not founded on outward circumstances or relations. It is not said that the poor will in no wise enter therein, or the lowly, or the infirm, or the aged, or the rich, or the noble, or the strong, or the young. These distinctions are now regarded as important, and without question, they do have an importance; but when men present themselves at the gates of the heavenly city, it will not be asked, are you learned or unlearned? are you rich or poor? are you noble or of lowly birth? The qualifications for citizenship in the New Jerusalem are not founded on outward relations or circumstances. Nor are these qualifications founded on the denominational distinctions which are recognized and loved and honored on earth. There can be no question that the division of the church into different denominations has been overruled by our heavenly Father for keeping his earthly church pure and watchful in doctrine and in practice; nor can there be any question that it is our duty during our present imperfect state to stand firmly by our belief and confession; but when men present themselves at the gates of the heavenly city, it will not be asked, are you Presbyterians, or Methodists, or Baptists? The qualifications for citizenship in the New Jerusalem are not founded on these denominational distinctions.

These qualifications are wholly of a moral character. Outward circumstances and relations stretch from the cradle to the grave, but no further. Denominational distinctions, important as they may be now, are lost in the general assembly and church of the first born. God looks upon the heart, and not upon the garment; on the life, and not on the profession; and God is king of heaven and the sole judge of the qualifications of its inhabitants. There are reasons, obvious reasons, why citizenship in the New Jerusalem is founded on moral qualifications. Sin is the source, the essence of misery. Some one has well said, "Hell is that monosyllable 'sin' repeated, re-echoed, reverberated for ever." As misery is unknown in heaven, sin

must be unknown. And sinners must be disqualified, not only because of their misery, but also because of their unfitness. They could not sing its songs of redemption; they could not join in its worship; they could not engage in its pleasures. It may be true, and no doubt is true, that we as yet know but little of heaven, but this much we do know: our qualifications for citizenship in that better land will be founded on moral character, and not on outward circumstances or denominational distinctions.

Bearing this in mind, we are prepared to consider and understand the disqualifications which are here enumerated. They are three in number. The first one is: "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth." These words describe the opposite of that which is holy; that is, unholiness, uncleanness, sinfulness. From this it appears that unholy and sinful ones will not enter the New Jerusalem. Those who are unholy in heart or life, in word or deed, are disqualified for citizenship in that better country. We may then ask, who will be saved? for there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not. But we must remember that there is a way of pardon and sanctification through the Lord Jesus. Those who are pardoned through his blood and sanctified through his Spirit, are unholy no more. The words before us describe those who have not been pardoned and sanctified, those who have the defilement and sinfulness of their souls yet resting upon them. All such, because of their misery, their unfitness and their enmity to God, will have no place in heaven.

The second disqualification is expressed in these words: "Neither whatsoever worketh abomination." An abomination is anything which excites abhorrence or disgust. These words might describe those who are guilty of any disgusting, abhorrent or sinful practice, for all sin is an abomination in the sight of God. The meaning of this clause would then be identical with the meaning of the one we have just considered. But the word "abomination," as it is used in the Scriptures, generally has a well defined meaning. It refers to idolatry. The worship of idols is the abomination of abominations in the sight of God. If this is the meaning of the word in the present connection, and we see no reason to doubt it, then the persons who are here described as having no place in heaven are idolaters. We must not, however, think that they only are idolaters who worship graven images. The second commandment not only forbids the worship of God by images, but also the worship of him in any way not appointed in his word. They, therefore, are idolaters who give to any other object the love, obedience and worship which should be given to God, or who render to God love, obedience and worship in an unauthorized way. All such, because of their misery, their unfitness, and their enmity to God, will have no place in heaven.

The third disqualification is expressed in these words: "Or maketh a

lie." This describes those who are false to themselves, to their fellow-men and to God; those who by their lives make God a liar, and his truth a lie. All such, because of their misery, their unfitness and their enmity to God, will have no place in heaven.

These are the three disqualifications which are here mentioned, viz., unholiness, ungodliness and falsehood. Those who are unholy, ungodly and untruthful, have no right to expect that they will ever pass through the gates into the city. But some one may say, will not death work this change in us? Though we are not fit now, will not death make us fit? There can be no more fatal delusion than the one which underlies these questions. Death works no change in the moral and spiritual character. It presents the man before God just as it found him. Death transfers, it does not transform. It carries the man from the earth into the presence of God; it does not transform the ungodly into the godly. It sets the seal of immutability upon the character, and says, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still."

Let us now turn to the qualifications for heavenly citizenship, as they are here revealed. We have seen that the disqualifications are unholiness, ungodliness and falsehood. We would expect the qualifications to be the very opposite, holiness, godliness and truth. And so they are; but the Spirit of inspiration has seen fit to describe the inhabitants of heaven in these words, with which our previous studies have made us familiar: "They which are written in the Lamb's book of life." It should perhaps be remarked here, that these qualifications, like the disqualifications already referred to, are not founded on outward relations and denominational distinctions. No man's name is written in the book of life because he is rich, or noble, or learned, or because he is a member of this or that particular church; or because he has been baptized, for many who have been baptized in the name of the true God will come short of entering into rest; or because he is a professing member of the church, for many who have sat at the communion table and have handled the appointed emblems of the great sacrifice will plead in vain for admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

How important become the questions, What is the Lamb's book of life? Whose names are written there? Are our names among the number? No dweller on earth has ever yet seen the Lamb's book of life, in which the names of all the citizens of the New Jerusalem are enrolled. No one has ever climbed to heaven and wrested the wonderful volume from the hands of its omnipotent keeper. Even Paul, when he was caught up into the third heavens and saw many things which it was not possible for man to utter, did not see the roll of the sons of God. Even John, who in vision walked about the celestial city, was not vouchsafed a glimpse of the contents of the Lamb's book of life. No angel has ever proclaimed on earth the

names of the elect. They have been sent by the Heavenly Father to announce many things of interest to the human race, but the Lamb's book of life seems to be one thing into which they are not permitted to look. No man has, therefore, the right to say, I have seen my name in the book of life; or, an angel has revealed it to me that my name is in the book of life; therefore, I will never fail. If these things are so, how can we tell whose names are in the book of life? How can we know, while we are yet on earth, who are qualified for citizenship in the heavenly city? Why, in this way: The Bible is almost a reprint of the Lamb's book of life; it is almost a transcript of what is contained in the heavenly record. The great difference between the two is this: the Lamb's book of life contains the names of the saved; the Lamb's book of revelation contains the character of the saved. If we find our character described in the latter, we may rise to the assurance that our names are written in the former. And the more nearly our character agrees with the revelation, the stronger will the assurance become. Herein we may see the difference between the assurance of sense and the assurance of faith. If we could be carried to heaven and see our names written in the Lamb's book of life, such a sight would give us the assurance of sense, that is, an assurance founded on sense. If we find our characters described in the word of God as those who are saved, we believe that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and this gives us the assurance of faith, that is, an assurance founded on faith. While it might give us joy to attain the former, the latter is far better; for while our senses are often deceived, our faith is deceived but seldom.

What does the Lamb's book of revelation tell us of the character of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life? Those whose names are recorded therein must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing is more clearly revealed than this. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," is a truth which appears on almost every page of the book of God. Let no man wonder at the emphasis which is put on faith, both in the written word and in the preached word, for faith is, by divine appointment, the great prerequisite to eternal life. Those whose names are written in the book of life must take the written word as the rule of their life. By it their thoughts, words and deeds must be regulated. The Bible contains the alphabet of heaven, and unless we learn that alphabet we cannot hope to speak the language of that better country. Those whose names are written in the book of life must be holy. Without holiness, no man can see the Lord. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you"? Those whose names are written in the book of life must keep the commandments of Christ. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Those whose names

are written in the book of life must have brotherly love. "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

This is the character of the inhabitants of heaven. They have faith, holiness, obedience, and love. It should not be difficult to determine whether we have these characteristics. If we have them, we may rise to the assurance that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life. And the more faith, holiness, obedience and love we have, the stronger will our assurance be. With such an assurance we may say, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## LECTURE LXXI.

### THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.—REV. 22: 1, 2.

THE first five verses of this chapter continue and complete the description of the heavenly Jerusalem. It is unfortunate that, in our Bibles, they are separated from the preceding chapter, for this separation has a tendency to mislead. In the subject of the present lecture, the river of life and the tree of life are brought to our notice.

I. We have a description of THE RIVER OF LIFE, and though this description is brief, it is sufficient to give a vivid idea of the symbol, and to reveal its meaning. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." We must not think that the apostle was wandering aimlessly through the streets of the New Jerusalem, going here and there as his inclination might lead him; he had an angel for his guide, the same angel who is brought to our notice in the preceding chapter, who had measured the city and explained its parts. This heavenly guide led the apostle to the most interesting spots, and called his attention to those features which it is best for us to know. It was this angel who led the seer away from the walls, and gates, and foundations, and brought him to another part of the holy city and showed him the river of the water of life. The fact that the

angel singled out this river of life must convince us that this is an important feature in the celestial landscape, and that it shadows forth important truths in this revelation of heaven.

The river of life : what is it ? Let no one fail to observe how frequently this word "life" occurs in these descriptions of heaven. The river of the heavenly city is the river of life ; its water is the water of life ; its trees are the trees of life ; its book is the book of life. This is no unmeaning or rhetorical repetition. It points to the great characteristic of the future, to its life, a life without dangers, a life without sorrows, a life without end, a life without death. Of course the river of life is a symbol. Of what is it a symbol ? It is a symbol of the blessings of salvation. It shadows forth the joy, and peace, and holiness, and happiness, which flow from God in Christ, through the Spirit, to every believing soul. This symbol is so often employed by the inspired writers, that those who are familiar with the Scriptures can have no doubt as to its meaning. Let us notice a few passages. Isaiah says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." And what are the waters save the blood and Spirit of Christ, and the blessings which come through that blood and Spirit ? The prophet Ezekiel mentions it as one main feature of the predicted restoration, that there were waters issuing from the threshold of the house, which rose and rose until they became a river which could not be passed over, and which filled with life everything they touched. And what were these waters save the blessings of salvation ? Our Lord said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life." Of a similar import is that remarkable invitation which is contained in this very chapter : "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." What can these living waters be save the blessings of salvation ? These blessings are not confined to the present life ; and therefore, we are told of rivers in the life which is to come. The Psalmist says, "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures : for with thee is the fountain of life." So in the passage before us, we are told that there is a river of life, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and flowing evermore through the streets of the New Jerusalem. We therefore repeat it, the river of life which John saw in vision is a symbol of the blessings of salvation, which include the blood of Christ and the Spirit of Christ, and joy, and peace, and holiness, and happiness, blessings which are partly enjoyed here, but which will not be fully enjoyed till the hereafter has come.

This figure appeared more beautiful and appealed more powerfully to those who lived in the lands of the Bible than to us who live in the well watered lands of the West. Here broad rivers, and flowing streams, and



bubbling springs are so common that we do not appreciate their value. In those parched countries a living stream was a wonder and a blessing. That city whose walls were washed by a continually flowing river was envied. That home in which an unfailing fountain was ever playing was counted a greater possession than gold, or silver, or flocks, or herds. This is the reason why the figure of the river of life, and similar figures, are so common in the word of God. This is the reason why such a river is described as sparkling in the celestial light, and flowing through the streets of the symbolical city of the New Jerusalem. Nor can we overlook the appropriateness of the figure, though it may appear to us less beautiful and appeal to us less powerfully, than to those who lived in the lands of the Bible. Those who dwell on the banks of a river can draw out all they need and no one can forbid it. Those who have an unfailing spring bubbling up beside their doors, can drink their fill without money and without price. So the blessings of salvation are free. Whosoever is athirst may come. Whosoever will may take freely. Water is purifying. It is the chief purifying element in nature. It is the means by which our homes, our hands and our garments are cleansed. So the blessings of salvation are purifying. He who comes to Jesus is washed from all uncleanness. Though his sins are as scarlet, they shall be made as wool; though they are as red as crimson, they shall be made as white as snow. Water quenches thirst. In this nothing else can supply its place. So the blessings of salvation satisfy the unutterable longings of the soul. Christ and his gospel alone can satisfy that longing for immortality and happiness which is to be found in every human breast. Water gives health, vigor and life. Those who are cut off from all supply must sicken, languish and die. So the blessings of salvation give spiritual health, and unfailing vigor, and eternal life.

We need not trace the resemblance between water and the blessings of salvation to any greater length. We know something from observation or experience of the blessings of salvation in the present life, though we must confess that our knowledge is as yet very limited, and we know that these blessings are properly symbolized by a river of life. Let us now, guided by that angel who guided the apostle John, follow that river up to its source. We know what it is as it flows through this sinful earth, tainted with the impurities it has received from contact with human imperfections and filthiness, and defiled by the enmity of wicked men and angels; but let us try to discover what it is as it flows through the sinless heaven, before it has been marred by human taint or satanic defilement. And let us be prepared to see wonders; for if the river of life is so great a blessing when it reaches this distant part of the vineyard, what must it be as it springs up close beside the throne! If it gives so much joy to those who drink its tainted and defiled streams on earth, how much greater must be the joy of those

who are permitted to drink from it in all its untainted purity as it flows along the plains of heaven!

First of all, it is a *river* of life. It is no little spring or struggling rivulet, which a score of thirsty ones could drain, or which the sun of a summer's day could evaporate. It is a river, deep and broad, at which unnumbered multitudes can quench their thirst for unnumbered ages, without lessening the volume of its flow. A mighty throng are now standing upon its banks, a throng which has been gathering ever since righteous Abel went home to glory, and which is being increased by night and by day, as the saintly from our homes and our congregations are called up higher to receive their reward. And this throng is only the beginning of a mightier throng; they are only the first few who have entered the heavenly sanctuary, and who are waiting for the coming of the rest of the general assembly and church of the first born. When this general assembly has gathered, and the latest comer has passed through the gates into the city, they will constitute an innumerable multitude, whose song of praise will be as the noise of many waters. And yet this innumerable multitude, through all the unending ages of their everlasting life, will not exhaust the river from which they obtain their supply. Nor will they drink lightly as they do here on earth. Now if we can get a little taste of joy, and peace, and pardon, we are satisfied, but then no little taste will be sufficient. In heaven the blessings of salvation will be enjoyed in full measure. Here they flow in little streams and tiny rivulets; there they flow in a river deep and broad, which human skill cannot fathom, and human need cannot exhaust.

It is a river of the water of *life*; that is, its water gives fullest life and prevents all forms of death. The water which we now draw from the wells of salvation does give spiritual life, but every Christian knows from his own bitter experience that it does not, on account of his own weakness, give fullest life. There are possibilities of spiritual experience, of joy and of peace, of which he may dream, but which he may not hope to reach in the present life. When we drink of the water of life as it flows in the heavenly river, and not as we draw it from our earthly wells, all these possibilities will be realized. The water which we now draw from the wells of salvation does not prevent natural death. It is appointed unto all men, to the saint as well as the sinner, to die. There is but one way of exit from the world, and that is through the grave. When we drink of the water of life as it flows in the heavenly river, and not as we draw it from our earthly wells, we will die no more; the last enemy will be conquered; death will be swallowed up in victory. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the river of the New Jerusalem is a river of the water of *life*.

It is a *pure* river of the water of life, clear as crystal. In this respect it differs widely from the streams at which we try to quench our spiritual thirst on earth. As has been said, they are tainted and defiled. As they

flow through this world, saturated with sin, they lose their purity. Man's imperfect and prejudiced explanations of the gospel muddy the pure stream. Satan in his enmity and cunning mingles with it many an error. And so the pure river which issued from the throne of God clear as crystal, when it reaches our homes and our hearts, is tainted and defiled. It is no longer pure. It is no longer clear as crystal. The fault is not in the river, but in the impurities of the enemy's country through which it flows, and in the unclean hands and unclean vessels with which we dip up the water of life. When we drink of the water of life as it flows in the heavenly country, where neither the malice of Satan nor the wickedness of men can defile it, we will find it more sweet and more beautiful than we ever dreamed it to be. Sometimes even now, when we take large draughts from the wells of salvation, and when we feel the joys of salvation filling our souls to the very brim, we think we have reached the full measure of joy and peace, and in our weakness and ignorance we say, "Our willing souls would always stay in such a frame as this." Like the apostles on the mount of transfiguration, we wish for tabernacles that we might abide for ever. When we enter the heavenly land, we will find that there is a joy, and a peace, and a happiness which infinitely surpass our most exalted earthly experience. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the river of the New Jerusalem is clear as crystal, and therefore unlike the streams at which we try to quench our thirst now, and infinitely better than they.

This pure river of the water of life, which is clear as crystal, proceeds "from the throne of God and of the Lamb." God and the Lamb have but one throne, for they are equal in power and glory. This accords with the words of the Saviour, when he speaks of the time when he shall sit down with the Father on his throne. These blessings of salvation, which are symbolized by the river of life, come from the Father and the Son. The Father devised the plan of salvation, and the Son wrought it out; and it was devised and wrought out in such a way as did not in the least conflict with the attributes of the Godhead. Hence, the river of life is described, not merely as proceeding from God and the Lamb, but as proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. This the saints in heaven will never forget. As they see the river of life ever flowing from the throne, their song of thanksgiving will ever be, "Salvation, and glory, and power, and might, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

This is what is meant by this part of the symbol. The river of life shadows forth the blessings of salvation, which are now enjoyed in some measure, but which will not be enjoyed in all their fullness till the hereafter has come. When we enter heaven, if, through divine grace, this privilege will ever be ours, we will find that they surpass our highest earthly expectations. They will be as great and abundant as a river deep and

broad; they will impart the fullest measure of spiritual vigor and life; they will be without the least taint to mar their crystal purity. While, therefore, we are now drinking from the streams which make glad the earthly city of our God, we may well long for the time when we will go up higher and stand beside the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

II. We have a description of **THE TREE OF LIFE**. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." This symbol is so closely related to the one we have just considered, that it will require little explanation. The tree of life, like the river of life, shadows forth the blessings of salvation. The fruit of the former, like the water of the latter, is abundant; it gives the fullest measure of life, and prevents every form of death; it is free from all taint and corruption. But instead of dwelling on these characteristics, which were noticed in the exposition of the preceding verse, let us turn to the new characteristics which are brought to our attention in the verse before us.

In the first place, the ripened blessings of the complete salvation are accessible to all the inhabitants of heaven. This thought is beautifully expressed. The tree of life is growing everywhere along the banks of the river, and on all the streets of the New Jerusalem. Of course we are not to understand the words, "the tree of life," as describing a single tree; it describes many trees. We say the pine tree grows on the mountains of the north, or the palmetto tree flourishes along the streams of the south. Thus the apostle says that the tree of life was growing and flourishing in the heavenly city. Let us get the symbol, as the apostle saw it, firmly fixed in our minds. The language is somewhat obscure, but the general meaning is plain enough. Trees of life were growing on both banks of the river; they lined all the streets of the city, and filled them with their grateful shade. What a beautiful picture does this present to our imagination! Remember the walls, the gates, and the palaces, as they have been described; remember the unclouded light and the sorrowless inhabitants; and then imagine the crystal river flowing and murmuring through the streets, and the trees of life filling every part with the music of their leaves, the fragrance of their fruit, and the shelter of their shade. Such a symbol as this must have filled the heart of every dweller in the sultry and sun-parched Orient with unutterable longing; nor can it fail to move our souls with the beauty, and the peace, and the rest, which it shadows forth. As has been said, the accessibility of the blessings of salvation is shadowed forth by this part of the symbol. There was a tree of life in the garden of Eden. After our first parents were driven out, it still stood in the garden,

but it was no longer accessible. An angel, with a flaming sword, kept the way of the tree of life, so that neither Adam nor his sons might approach. How different it is in the paradise regained! There the tree of life will stand in the very streets; no guardian angel with his sword of fire will stand before it; every passer by may pluck and eat his fill. Even now, though the fruit of the tree of life is freely offered to all, there are many things which keep us back. The temptations of Satan, our prejudices, and our unbelief, fence about the tree of life with a barrier almost as hard to overcome as the flaming sword of the cherub; and over this obstacle many a sinner is unable or unwilling to climb. In heaven every obstacle will be removed and every dweller in the holy city can pluck and eat at his pleasure. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that "in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life."

In the next place, the ripened blessings of the complete salvation are unfailing and uninterrupted. In heaven the tree of life will "bear twelve manner of fruits, and will yield her fruit every month." You will observe that the words "manner of" are a supplement of our translators. The exact translation is, "which bare twelve fruits." This may mean that the tree of life will bear twelve different kinds of fruit, as our translators understood it; or it may mean, and this, we think, is the true explanation, that the tree of life will bear twelve harvests every year. In either case the general meaning is the same. The tree of life will always be loaded with fruit. Its fruit will ripen every month. Unlike the trees of earth, it will need no winter's rest to prepare it for its summer's fruitfulness. In our present experience, the blessings of salvation are not enjoyed uninterruptedly. To-day we have peace, to-morrow we are filled with unrest; to-day we have joy, to-morrow we are filled with sorrow; to-day we taste the sweets of holiness, to-morrow we are overtaken in presumptuous sin; to-day there is sunshine, to-morrow there are clouds and darkness. So it is with all the blessings of salvation. They are interrupted, and we must expect them to be interrupted by satanic temptation and human weakness. In heaven, peace, joy, holiness, and every other blessing will endure for ever. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the tree of life bare twelve fruits and yielded her fruit every month.

In the next place, the ripened blessings of the complete salvation will infinitely surpass our highest earthly conceptions. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." See what the gospel has done for the nations of the earth! It has purified their worship, it has reformed their manners and morals, it has restrained their sins. See what the gospel has done for the individuals of earth! It has healed their diseases, pardoned their iniquities, saved their souls. Yet all this has been done by the leaves of the tree of life. And if the leaves are so beneficial, how much more

beneficial must the ripened fruit be? Here we are favored with only the leaves of the tree of life, the least precious part. Who can imagine what our experiences will be, when the Lord of the paradise regained will put the fruit into our hands and say, "Eat, O friends, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"? We now dream of heaven and picture to ourselves what heaven is like; but when we enter it, we will find that our present experiences were not sufficient to give us any proper idea of the reality. The leaves of the tree of life can help us only to a faint conception of what its ripened fruit will be. All this is shadowed forth by the fact that the leaves of the tree are now for the healing of the nations, but its ripened fruit for the food of the glorified saints.

In conclusion, let us be reminded of the unity of the church on earth and in heaven. We hope to stand beside the river of life, and to sit beneath the tree of life; to drink of the water of the one and to eat of the fruit of the other. We have no right to cherish this hope, unless we are now drinking of the river of life and eating of the tree of life. All God's saints are drinking from the same stream of salvation. The only difference is, those who have entered into rest are drinking higher up the river, near its source. All God's saints are eating from the same tree. The only difference is, those who have entered into rest are feasting on the fruit, while here we have to be content with the leaves. We must be strengthened with the water of life now, if we expect ever to be strong enough to reach the throne from which it flows. We must be healed with the leaves of the tree of life now, if we expect ever to have an appetite for its fruit. Let us then take the water of life. Its streams are flowing by us in the offers of the gospel. We are ready to perish. The offer is full and free. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

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## LECTURE LXXII.

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### THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.—REV. 22: 3, 4.

THE characteristic of the New Jerusalem, which is brought to our notice in the subject of the present lecture, is expressed in these words: "no more curse"; and no characteristic should be more highly appreciated by us than this. In no respect does the heavenly state differ more widely from

the earthly than in this. This is a feature of the heavenly happiness which we should be able, from contrast, to understand. We are familiar with the curse and its effects. Ever since it was addressed to our fallen parents in the garden of Eden, it has been ringing through the world. There is not a land which has not heard its echoes; there is not a heart which has not felt its sting. It has changed the garden of Eden into Gethsemane, and torn up the tree of life to plant the cross of Christ. At its bidding thorns and briars spring in every field, and sorrows in every heart. At its bidding earth has been shaken with earthquakes, and swept with whirlwinds, and scorched with fire. Under its influence men have labored and thought in vain. Under its command hatred and anger, murder and war have marched in one hideous procession through all the centuries; and disease, and famine, the plague, and the pestilence, have visited every city and scourged every home. It has scarred the earth with graves, and watered it with the bitterest tears. The footsteps of the curse can be seen everywhere—in our homes, in our churches, in the city and in the country, in the forest and in the field, in our gardens and in our cemeteries, on the land and on the sea. The voice of the curse can be heard everywhere. It mingles with the sounds of the natural world; it gives tone to human speech; it thunders like a deep bass in the worship of the sanctuary, and it speaks even in the inspired word of God. The slimy trail of the serpent is over all the earth, and the terrible words of the primal curse are echoing through all the lands and through all the ages of time. Let the dweller on the earth go where he will, he cannot get beyond the reach of the effects of the curse. Let him abide where he will, he cannot shut out the sound of its fearful woes.

Since all this is so, we ought to be able to understand something of the beauty of that revelation which assures us that in heaven there will be no more curse. If we knew nothing of the effects of the curse, we might care little for its removal; but surely the labor, the trials, the sorrow, the anguish, and the death of the present must help us in comprehending the feature of the New Jerusalem which is brought to our attention in the words which begin the subject of the present lecture: "there shall be no more curse."

Let us inquire more particularly what is this curse which in the future is to be removed? For an answer to this question, we must turn to the beginning of revelation. No curse rested upon our first parents for a time after their creation, but they transgressed the commandments of their God, and God came to them in righteous anger and proclaimed the curse. This curse, which has not been fully removed, and which will not be till the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, may be divided with sufficient accuracy for our present purpose into three parts: the curse upon the woman; the curse upon the ground; the curse upon the man. We have not forgotten that the first part of the primal curse related to Satan, but

with this we have just now nothing to do. Long before the time referred to in this chapter, that part of the curse will be fully accomplished. The old serpent will be subdued and confined in the bottomless pit. It is only with so much of the curse as relates to the human race and its abode that we have now to do. In this part of the curse, woman is first singled out. As she was first in transgression, she was doomed to be first in suffering. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Her punishment was not only in her peculiar suffering and sorrow, but also in her dependence and subjection. The whole history of the race furnishes clear and painful evidence of the fulfillment of this part of the curse. In those lands into which Christianity has not entered, woman inherits a consuming and corroding curse. She enjoys neither the dignity of a woman, nor the love of a wife, nor the protection of a slave. In Christian lands this curse is being removed. The dependence and subjection are made less and less by the gospel. The better the gospel is understood and obeyed, the more on an equality will the husband and the wife, the brother and the sister, the man and the woman stand. The elevation of woman is an encouraging sign of the approach of the millennium. It gives promise of the dawning of the day when this part of the curse will be removed. Though this curse is being removed, we may not expect that it will be entirely removed till the perfection of the future comes. Then woman will stand beside her husband and brother, as she was in the creation, and as she is fitted to be in all her mental, moral and spiritual powers, equal in dignity, honor and glory. Then that burden of dependence and subjection which she has borne through all the centuries, and which men, when blessed with the gospel of Christ, the gospel of perfect equality, have been so slow in lifting, will be removed, for there will be no more curse there.

The second part of the curse fell upon the ground. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." The earth was first created fruitful and beautiful. There was not an unsightly blot upon all the fair landscape. Harvests followed each other without intermission, and without toil. But under the influence of the blighting curse, all this has been changed. Barren deserts, rugged rocks, tangled jungles, and miasmatic swamps everywhere mar the fair face of nature; and winter's snow and summer's heat, the blasting and the mildew, the caterpillar and the locust interfere with the reaping of the harvest which man has sown. Sometimes a frost blights the labor of months; sometimes the earth opens her mouth and cities with their inhabitants are buried in one common sepulcher; sometimes the tempest and the torrent engulf flocks and herds, homes and dwellers in them in sudden ruin. The ground has been



visited with a consuming and corroding curse for man's sake. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together. The earthquake and the thunder, the tempest and the frost, the miasma and the famine are only echoes of these words which were addressed to the trembling Adam: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." In the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, this part of the curse will be removed. The lost paradise, with all its beauty and fruitfulness, will be restored. There will be no more barren deserts to defy the skill of the husbandman; no more rugged rocks and tangled jungles to offend the taste; no more miasmatic swamps to breed pestilence and death. The tree of life on the banks of the heavenly river will yield its fruit every month, and the hopes of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem will never be disappointed by finding on the tree nothing but leaves. They will eat of the heavenly manna, and God will make them drink from the river of his pleasures; for then the curse, which was put upon the ground for man's sake, will be no more.

The third part of the curse fell upon man himself. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This curse is twofold. It consists, in the first place, in wearing, exhaustive and comparatively fruitless toil. How closely has this curse been clinging to the race since the beginning! The sweat of the face and the eating of bread have always been inseparably connected. "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." Even the most exhausting labor will hardly supply the laborer and his family with the necessaries of life. Those who labor hardest, and who receive the most abundant rewards for their labors, can get nothing more than their food and clothing, for they can carry nothing with them when they go hence to be here no more. The slave in the mine, the farmer in the field, the sailor on the ocean, the mechanic in the workshop, the merchant in the counting room, and the student in the study, are all under the curse, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," and waiting and longing to be delivered. In the new heavens and new earth, this part of the curse will be removed. The inhabitants of the New Jerusalem will have their work to do; they will not fold their hands in idleness, though we do not fully know as yet how they will be employed; they will serve the Lord, though we do not know fully yet in what their service consists. But this we know: their work will be a pleasure and their service a joy. The curse which has, through all the years of time, embittered the duty of labor, will be no more.

The other part of the twofold curse which was pronounced upon man consists in death. The history of the race is but a fulfillment of this part of the curse. The concluding sentence of every man's earthly life is, "and he died." In this respect the king and the peasant, the infant and

the patriarch, the judge and the criminal, the physician and the patient are alike. All are heirs of the same diseases and candidates for the same grave. No skill, or wealth, or tears, or sanctity can shield from the stroke of the king of terrors. Nor are the living permitted to forget the presence and the power of this part of the curse. The pains and the sicknesses which are continually visiting our bodies, and the deaths which are continually visiting our homes, are evermore repeating, in a way we cannot mistake, the words of the primal curse, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." In the new heavens and the new earth this part of the curse will be removed. The inhabitants of that better country will never say, I am sick. No mourners will go about its streets. No somber signs of bereavement will ever float from its doors. No funeral dirge or wail of bereavement will ever mingle with the glad alleluias of the redeemed, for the curse of death, which has made our world one vast hospital and one mighty cemetery, will be no more.

This feature of the New Jerusalem must appeal powerfully to us, who are through our whole life so familiar with the curse and its effects. Though we cannot fully understand yet what is included in the removal of the curse, we know it is something which will go beyond the greatest stretch of our imaginations. Let us, then, refresh and strengthen our souls on the prospect, as on grapes of Eshcol from the promised land. There will be no mount Ebal of cursing there, but every mountain will be a mountain of blessing. The words, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," will no more be heard; every tongue will unite in saying, "Blessed are they who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

We would, however, come far short of our conceptions of heaven, if we supposed that its blessedness consisted only in the absence of misery. Heaven is not merely a place of negatives. For every negative there is a positive. There is no night there, but there is also endless day. There is no sorrow there, but there is also endless joy. There is no death there, but there is also endless life. There is no temple there, but there is also endless worship. There is no curse there, but there is also positive blessings, which are an evidence and a result of the removal of the curse. To four of these blessings our attention is now called.

The first is the presence of the divine throne. "The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." As in Israel of old, the presence of any accursed thing in the camp was followed by the removal of the divine presence, so in the future, God and the curse will not be present at the same time and place. Where one is, the other will not be; where one is not, the other will be. Therefore, we are told that in the heavenly city, in which the curse will not be, the throne of God and the Lamb will ever

stand. What does the continual presence of the divine throne indicate? Of course it indicates the presence of the glorious persons who sit upon it. This will be one of the peculiar joys of heaven. On earth we see but little of the divine presence. We are too weak to endure, and too sinful to enjoy much of that presence; and hence we have to live and die under an overshadowing cloud. It is true, sometimes in our more exalted spiritual experience the cloud seems in some measure to be removed, and we have a foretaste of the promise; but it is only when the curse is removed, and our souls recovered from all the weakness and taint of sin, that we will be able to stand unvailed in the presence of God and of the Lamb. The presence of the throne also indicates the fact that we will then be under the immediate and visible government of the glorious persons who sit upon it. It is true, the saints are even now under their government, but they are often unwilling servants. And, in this world, there are yet many unconquered rebels. In the heavenly country all will yield obedience to their divine King, and they will find their highest pleasure in standing before his throne and in doing his will.

This brings us to the second evidence and result of the removal of the curse, viz., willing service. "His servants shall serve him." It will be useless to speculate as to what that service will be. It may be that God will send his glorified saints, as he now sends his angels, to other parts of the universe to carry messages of love and salvation; but this has not been revealed. All we know is, that there will be rest, worship and service; but for a full knowledge of what is included in that rest, worship and service, we must wait till we know as we are known. The simple fact that the glorified saints of God willingly serve him, shows that they are wonderfully changed from what they were here on earth. Now they serve him, but it is with reluctance. Through weakness and temptation they often rebel. It requires much instruction, and sore discipline, and many chastisements, before we are ready to say in any and in all circumstances, "Here we are; send us." But in heaven every one will be eager to serve his God in whatever way God may think best.

The third evidence and result of the removal of the curse is the full revelation of the divine glory. "And they shall see his face." Here we do not see him. We try to imagine what he is like, and we may reach a proper conception of some of his attributes, but God himself is unseen. We seize the telescope and point it to the sky, where star seems piled on star, and world on world, till the mind fails to compute the distance and staggers beneath the load of thought. But in all those rolling worlds, though the footsteps of the Creator are everywhere visible, God himself is unseen still. We may close our eyes in prayer, and may have the assurance and evidence that every word we utter is heard by him, but God is unseen still. We may follow the dying down to the very gates of death, and

may catch glimpses of the ineffable glory as they enter in, but God is unseen. The curse is upon us and has blinded our eyes. It is only when that curse is lifted and we stand on the other side of the river, that we will see his face. Then will our longings be satisfied, and these words be fulfilled: "In my flesh shall I see God." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The fourth evidence and result of the removal of the curse is the open and manifest acknowledgment that we are the Lord's. "And his name shall be in their foreheads." We have had occasion to refer to this symbol in some of our former lectures. In ancient times masters sometimes branded their names, or the initials of their names, upon the foreheads of their slaves, so that they could be distinguished from the slaves of others. Hence we are told that the beast had set his mark, and his number, and his name upon the foreheads of his followers; that is, by their profession, and their practices, and their lives they were plainly distinguished from all others. So the name of God, which is here said to be written upon the foreheads of his saints; is but a symbol shadowing forth the fact that their sainthood will be as manifest as if the name of God was written in their foreheads. It will be known to all that they are the saints of God. On earth this is not always manifest. Some are counted among the people of God who are not; some are not counted among the people of God who are his. The saints are so imperfect in their hearts and lives, and hypocrites can put on such a semblance to holiness, that it is no easy matter to distinguish one from the other; and the tares and the wheat have to grow together till the harvest. After the harvest they will be separated, their character will be developed, and all will know who are the children of God and who are the children of Satan. The sin and misery of the one, and the holiness and happiness of the other will be as different as light is from darkness. And this, when it comes to pass, will be an evidence and result that they have entered the land in which there is no more curse.

This is the characteristic of heaven which is here brought to our notice. It is a characteristic which is well worthy of a place beside any other. On the one hand, the curse under which the human race and the whole creation have been groaning and travailing in pain together from the beginning, will be removed; on the other hand, the throne of God will be established in the midst of his glorified church, his servants will serve him, they will see his face no longer through a glass darkly, and their sainthood will be as manifest as if the name of God was written in their foreheads. We have no right to expect to inherit this blessedness hereafter, unless we enter upon its inheritance here. How can we now throw off the burden of the curse? By permitting Christ to become a curse for us. How can

we now worship at the throne of God and the Lamb? By enthroning Christ in our hearts as our Lord and King. How can we now, as his servants, serve him? By obeying his commandments and taking his word as the rule of our life. How can we now see his face? By looking upon Christ as our personal Saviour, for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. How can we now have the name of God written in our foreheads? By numbering ourselves with the friends of Christ and by living as his friends should live. If we thus do, and thus live, we can even now enjoy a foretaste of that promised inheritance. Day by day, we may feel the lifting of the curse, the peace and security of the divine government, and the joy of seeing God and being his peculiar people. Day by day, placing our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, we can shake off the dust and ashes of the curse, and put on the garland and crown of the promised blessings; we can lay aside the sackcloth of the fall, and be investing ourselves with the coronation robes of the kings and priests of God.

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## LECTURE 'LXXIII.

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### THE NEW JERUSALEM—CONTINUED.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.—REV. 22: 6.

THE subject of the present lecture concludes the description of the New Jerusalem. The features of the heavenly city which are here brought to our notice are three in number: the endless day; the bright radiance of the divine presence; and perpetual kingship.

I. The first feature of the New Jerusalem which is here described is ITS ENDLESS DAY. "And there shall be no night there." This feature was once before brought to our notice. In verse 25 of the preceding chapter, it is said, "the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there." It will be sufficient here to refer to what was said in our exposition of that verse. But as the Spirit of inspiration regarded this characteristic of heaven worthy of a second mention, it should have a prominent place in our hearts and memory. Let us glory in the thought. The endless day of the New Jerusalem tells of labor which will know no weariness, and of service which will know no rest. It tells of perfect security from fear and danger. It tells of perfect knowledge,

enlightenment and holiness. It tells of entire deliverance from death. Here a few hours spent in the worship of God weary us in body and in mind; there we will rest not day nor night. Here our searchings after knowledge, and our labors for others and for God must be interrupted by the coming of night; there we will learn and labor through all the unnumbered hours of the endless day. Here our attainments and our activities are cut short by the feebleness of age and the approach of death; there we will make unbindered progress for ever and ever. We cannot yet understand it. When we have given to imagination its wildest flight, and to faith its furthest reach and strongest grasp, we must still say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." As he never slumbers nor sleeps, so we will neither slumber nor sleep, when we enter that land in which there is no night.

II. The second feature of the New Jerusalem which is here described is **THE BRIGHT RADIANCE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE**. "And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." If we had been told nothing more than this, that there would be no night there, we might have thought that the natural sun would never set, and that his rays, undimmed and uneclipsed, would fill the heavenly city with the light of perpetual day; but to avoid the possibility of mistake, we are told that there will be no need of natural light, like the light of the sun, or of artificial light, like the light of a candle, "for the Lord God giveth them light."

This is not the first time that the divine source of the light of heaven is brought to our notice in these revelations of the hereafter. In verse 11 of the preceding chapter, we are told that the holy Jerusalem had "the glory of God, and that her light," or luminary, "was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." In verse 23 of the same chapter, we are told, that the "city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is the same thought which is now for the third time, in a somewhat different form, brought to our notice. Here we need all the light we can get to illumine our pathway towards heaven. We must have the light which shines forth from nature, from the word, from the symbols, sacraments and ordinances of the church, and from the Mediator, who is the sun of righteousness; and even with all this light, we often stumble and go astray. When we enter heaven, none of these things will be needed. The teachings of nature will not be needed, for we will have advanced so far in our spiritual education that nature can give us no new light. The teachings of symbols and sacraments will not be needed, for we will have advanced so far in our spiritual education that they will be useless. Even

? Christ as Mediator will not be needed, for he will have accomplished his great work of reconciliation, and will have delivered up his mediatorial kingdom to God and the Father. These means and instrumentalities, by which we are now instructed and enlightened, are the things which are shadowed forth by the sun and the candle in the words before us; and they will not be needed in the perfect knowledge and enlightenment of the future. We would not underrate the present value of these means and instruments. What would we have been without the help of nature, and the word, and sacrament, and ordinance? Let us be thankful that we have enjoyed their light. Though these suns have sometimes been eclipsed, and though these candles have sometimes been extinguished, they have shed much light upon our path, and they have brought us in safety thus far on our way towards heaven. The thought of what they have done for us, and of what they are doing for us, will help us to appreciate the glory of that heavenly state in which they will be needed no more. And why will they not then be needed? Because we will then receive our light and instruction, not through means and instrumentalities, but directly from God himself. Then, neither sun nor candle, but the Lord God himself will be our light. In plain words, we will then know God and our duty, not from the light of nature or from the revelations of God's word, or from such ordinances as are now peculiar to the church, but from the mouth of God himself. While, therefore, we are thankful for word and ordinance, for the sun and candles of the present dispensation, let us be specially thankful that the time is coming when our souls will be advanced in glory and knowledge beyond the teaching of these instructors, and when the Lord himself will be our light.

III. The third feature of the New Jerusalem which is here described is PERPETUAL KINGSHIP. "And they shall reign for ever and ever." You are aware that this is not a solitary expression in the word of God. Ruling is often ascribed to the saints in the Scriptures, especially in the Apocalypse. Jesus said to his apostles, that in the regeneration they should sit on twelve thrones, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Paul says, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." John says, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." And what will be our kingdom? Over what will we reign? We will reign over the angels. "Know ye not," says Paul to the Corinthian Christians, "that ye will judge angels"? We will reign over the secrets of nature; all creation will be subject to us, and there will be no marvel too deep for us to understand. We will reign over the secrets of providence; all the past will be remembered, and all its mysterious

events will arrange themselves in perfect harmony. We will reign over the secrets of grace; all the parts of the mediatorial plan will be made plain. We will reign over ourselves; there will be no conflict between the flesh and the spirit, so that when we would do good, evil is present with us; we will be masters of ourselves. And this kingdom will be everlasting. There will be no elements of weakness within, or powerful enemies without to threaten its safety. It is a kingdom, like the kingdom of God himself, which can never be moved.

This feature of the New Jerusalem, the perpetual kingship of the saints, is a fitting conclusion to this description of heaven. We cannot conceive of any greater glory than this; our longing hearts can desire nothing better than this. So great is the glory, that it almost staggers our greatest faith. But all this must be, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. The crown, which has fallen from our heads, will be placed again upon our brows; the scepter, which has dropped from our nerveless grasp, will again be put into our hands; our tattered rags will be exchanged for royal robes; we who have so long groveled in the dust and ashes, will ascend the thrones prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. How can we believe all this? It is too much for our faith. The least place in heaven is more than we deserve. We are worthy only to stand at a distance and to behold the King in his beauty and the land that is very far off. But there comes to our fainting souls a voice from heaven, saying, "Ye shall reign for ever and ever." "Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief."

This concludes the description of the New Jerusalem, a description which is more full and plain than any other found in the word of God. What we do not learn of heaven from this description, we may not hope to learn till death opens before us the gates of glory. Let us sum up, in a brief review, the main features of the heavenly state, as they have been brought to our notice. 1. Heaven will be something different from the order of things with which we are now acquainted. Former things will have passed away and all things will have become new. It will be "a new heaven and a new earth." In our meditations, we must lift our thoughts above the earthly, for there will be such a marvelous change in us, in our residence, in our employments, and in our lives, that we will, in many respects, bear only a very faint resemblance to those who once lived, and sinned, and worshiped on the earth. 2. The exact locality of heaven is carefully concealed. It may be that this world, which has been the great arena of conflict between Christ and Satan, will be re-created for the eternal abode of the redeemed. It may be that some other part of the universe will be fitted up for their home. But on this point we are left to conjecture. Nothing has been clearly revealed. We may, however, be



sure of this : heaven will be where the throne of God and the Lamb is. 3. Heaven will be entirely free from all the effects and consequences of sin. There will be no sorrow, or pain, or tears, or death, or curse. 4. Heaven will be a place of perfect light. There will be no night there, for the glory of God will lighten it. 5. Heaven will be a place of holiness. Into it nothing that defileth will ever come. 6. Heaven will be a place of unending service and uninterrupted communion with God. His servants will serve him, and they will always see his face. 7. Heaven will be a place of surpassing splendor. Its gates will be of pearl, its streets of gold, its foundations of precious stones. 8. Heaven will be a place of everlasting honor, for the saints will reign for ever and ever.

All this is shown to us in symbol ; it is revealed to us by a description of the holy city which John saw coming down from God out of heaven, and which is, by divine appointment, a figure of better things to come. John did not attempt to describe heaven in literal language, for literal language is too weak for such a task ; nor would we have been able to understand such a literal description. It would be a poor heaven which such beings as we are could comprehend. The more I study this passage, the more thankful I am for the symbols, which reveal and yet hide, which recede as we advance, which tell us something and then forbid our nearer approach. I do not want yet to understand what heaven is. When I have climbed to the highest pinnacle on which the human thinker can stand, I want to feel that I have not yet reached the bases of the everlasting hills, and that there are heights of which I have never yet dreamed. When I reach the Jordan and step down into its cold waters, I want to feel that the heavenly Canaan will fill my soul with all the raptures of a new discovery.

Our object in these lectures has not been so much to describe heaven, as to awaken in our souls earnest longings for its glory. Sometimes ministers have to preach the terrors of the law, and to call the attention of men to the thunders of Sinai and the quenchless fires of the bottomless pit ; but it is a far sweeter task to point to the rewards of heaven, and to say, be faithful unto death and you shall receive the crown of life. And this is what we have tried to do. Have our efforts been in vain ?

These revelations have a special beauty and sweetness for those who through faith have become the sons of God. Is it any wonder that we try to be faithful in duty, when we hope for such a reward ? Is it any wonder that we try to bear patiently our sorrows, when we hope for such a joy ? Our longings are expressed beautifully, yet faintly, in the poetical words of some unknown Roman Catholic monk of the sixteenth century.

“ Jerusalem, my happy home !

When shall I come to thee,

When shall my sorrows have an end,

Thy joys when shall I see ?

O happy harbor of the saints,

O sweet and pleasant soil,

In thee no sorrow may be found,

No grief, no care, no toil.

In thee no sickness may be seen,  
No hurt, no ache, no sore ;  
There is no death, no ugly deil,  
There's life for evermore.

No dampish mist is seen in thee,  
No cold nor darksome night ;  
There every soul shines as the sun,  
There God himself gives light.

There lust and lucre cannot dwell,  
There envy bears no sway,  
There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,  
But pleasure every way.

Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !  
God grant I once may see  
Thy endless joys, and of the same  
Partaker ay to be.

Thy walls are made of precious stones,  
Thy bulwarks diamonds square,  
Thy gates are of bright orient pearl  
Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy turrets and thy pinnacles  
With carbuncles do shine,  
Thy very streets are paved with gold,  
Surpassing clear and fine

Thy houses are of ivory,  
Thy windows crystal clear,  
Thy tiles are made of beaten gold ;  
O God, that I were there.

Within thy gates no thing doth come  
That is not passing clean,  
No spider's web, no dirt, no dust,  
No filth may there be seen.

Ah, my sweet home, Jerusalem !  
Would God I were in thee,  
Would God my woes were at an end,  
Thy joys that I might see.

Thy saints are crowned with glory great,  
They see God face to face,  
They triumph still, they still rejoice ;  
Most happy is their case.

We that are here in banishment  
Continually do moan ;  
We sigh and sob, we weep and wail,  
Perpetually we groan

Our sweet is mixed with bitter gall.  
Our pleasure is but pain,  
Our joys scarce last the looking on,  
Our sorrows still remain.

But there they live in such delight,  
Such pleasure and such play,  
As that to them a thousand years  
Doth seem as yesterday.

Thy vineyards and thy orchards are  
Most beautiful and fair,  
Full furnished with trees and fruits  
Most wonderful and rare.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks  
Continually are green ;  
There grow such sweet and pleasant  
As nowhere else are seen. [flowers,

There's nectar and ambrosia made,  
There's musk and civet sweet,  
There many a fair and dainty drug  
Are trodden under feet.

There cinnamon, there sugar grows,  
There nard and balm abound ;  
What tongue can tell, or heart conceive  
The joys that there are found ?

Quite through the streets, with silver  
The flood of life doth flow, [sound,  
Upon whose banks on every side,  
The wood of life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,  
And evermore do spring ;  
There evermore the angels sit,  
And evermore do sing.

There David stands with harp in hand,  
As master of the choir ;  
Ten thousand times that man were blest  
That might this music hear.

Our lady sings *magnificat*,  
 With tune surpassing sweet,  
 And all the virgins bear their parts,  
 Sitting about her feet.

There Magdalene hath left her moan,  
 And cheerfully doth sing,  
 With blessed saints whose harmony  
 In every street doth ring.

*Te Deum* doth Saint Ambrose sing,  
 Saint Austin doth the like;  
 Old Simeon and Zachary  
 Have not their song to seek.

Jerusalem, my happy home !  
 Would God I were in thee,  
 Would God my woes were at an end,  
 Thy joys that I might see ! ”

## LECTURE LXXIV.

### FAITHFUL AND TRUE SAYINGS.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God.—Rev. 22 : 6-9.

It is not an unusual thing for a book, or a sermon, or a treatise, to be divided formally or informally into three parts. In the first place, there is an introduction, in which the design of the author is unfolded. In the second place, there is the body of the work, in which the subject or subjects to be treated are discussed and explained. In the third place, there is a conclusion, in which the author makes a practical application of the subjects discussed, and bids the reader farewell. These three divisions are plainly marked in the book of the Revelation. The introduction is contained in the first chapter. Then the apostle gives the history of the church in a series of visions, from the days in which he lived until the end when the saints of God would be brought in safety to their heavenly home. We finished our discussion of this second division in our last lecture. It now remains for us to consider the third and last division, viz., the peroration or conclusion, which begins with verse 6 of this chapter, and continues to the end of the book. This conclusion, as we will discover, is in beauty and sublimity in perfect keeping with all that has preceded it. It forms a fitting peroration to the magnificent visions which have occupied our attention.

I. The first thing in this conclusion is A SOLEMN AFFIRMATION OF THE TRUTH of the things which are written in this book. “And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy

prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." This affirmation is made by the same angel who had taken part in the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials, and who had measured the heavenly Jerusalem and been the apostle's guide through its golden streets. There is need for such an affirmation. The revelations of this book are so glorious that they stagger our faith. They seem to be too good, too beautiful, to be true. It requires something more than an ordinary witness to convince us of their reality. It requires an angel's testimony before we can rest with confidence in our faith that all these things will surely come to pass. And this testimony is not withheld.

In the first place, the angel, who knows whereof he affirms, assures us that these things are "faithful." But what things? Not merely the description of the New Jerusalem, which immediately precedes the words under consideration, but all the things which are written in this book. All the chapters, and all the visions, and all the words are faithful. And what is the meaning of the word faithful? In this connection it means worthy of belief. It describes something which may be relied on with perfect confidence. Are not the things written in this book worthy of our belief? "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Is not this worth believing? "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "The dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Are not these words all worthy of our faith? And as it is with these detached passages, so it is with the entire visions. They are all worthy of belief. Look at those visions which shadow forth the complete drying up of the power of the false prophet; at those which shadow forth the final destruction of that impure and unfaithful church which has so long lorded it over God's heritage from her throne in the city of the seven hills; at those which shadow forth the overthrow of Satan and his everlasting imprisonment in the bottomless pit; at those which, under the figure of the holy city, shadow forth the surpassing glory of the heavenly state. Who would not desire to believe these things? Who would not regard them as worthy of belief? All who read the visions which are written in this book, even though they cannot yet fully understand them, must say with the angel, "These sayings are faithful"; they are worthy of our belief.

But are they "true"? This is the important question for us now. There

are many things which are worth believing, and which we would like to believe, but unfortunately they are not true, or they do not have sufficient evidence in their favor to win our faith. Are the things written in this book true, as well as faithful? The angel says they are. Is not his testimony to be relied on? All God's angels are holy, and that which is false never defiles their lips. And this angel knows whereof he affirms. We might doubt the testimony of a man with regard to heaven and the future, for these are objects which lie beyond the province of human knowledge; but this angel speaks of that which his own eyes had seen, and his own ears had heard. More than this, he was commissioned of God to do this very work, and he must have been prepared; for God always prepares those he commissions. We are told, not once, but again and again, that God sent his angel to make known unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. We have, then, not merely the testimony of the angel, though this ought to be sufficient; we have also the testimony of God himself. On the testimony of such witnesses, we should have no difficulty in believing that these things are true, as well as faithful.

More than this, the partial fulfillment of these revelations is sufficient to convince us that they are true. We have seen in our expositions that many of the symbols which appeared under the seals, and the trumpets, and the vials have been fulfilled in history. We have traced the resemblance between these symbols and the events of history. This resemblance is so strong, and the events so follow each other in the exact order in which the symbols appeared, that we were forced to the conclusion that these symbols were divinely appointed and designed to shadow forth these events. And there were sufficient grounds for this conclusion. If there was a resemblance between one symbol and one event, there would be but a very slight reason to suppose that one was intended to shadow forth the other. But if there is a resemblance between two successive symbols and two successive events, there is a stronger reason. And when a succession of many symbols corresponds with a succession of many events, the reason becomes so strong that it rises to certainty. This is the case in the book of the Revelation. Many successive symbols have been found to correspond with many successive events. If a searcher for antiquities should discover many fragments of an old painting, and if he should place these fragments together and should find that each piece fitted exactly to its fellow; and if, when they were put together, he should find that they made a beautiful picture, perfect in all its parts, he would conclude that the fragments were originally parts of one picture. So when we put together the separate symbols of the Apocalypse, and find that they form a beautiful picture of the events of history, we must conclude that the divine author intended these symbols to be placed together, and to form such a picture of the events of history.

We have also seen in our expositions that many of these symbols have

been fulfilled. Surely those which have been fulfilled are true. The event has placed their truth beyond the possibility of a doubt. It is true, some of these symbols have not been fulfilled. They pertain to the ages of the world which are yet future. But as many of them have been fulfilled, we may believe, we have a right to believe, that when the appointed time comes, they will all be fulfilled. We therefore conclude that all the things written in this book, whether they relate to the past or to the future, are true.

We are then prepared to accept with full confidence the angel's testimony. The things written in this book are faithful and true. They are faithful, that is, worthy of belief; they are true, for the testimony of the angel is confirmed by the fulfillment of many of these revelations. The things written in this book are therefore like the entire gospel, of which it is said, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." They are like the Lord Jesus himself, of whom it is said, "He is faithful and true." Let us then rejoice in the attestation to the truth of these revelations we have considered. Though many of them may seem too great for our faith, while we hear the angel's testimony let us say, "Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief."

In the next place, we have the author of these sayings. "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel." As has been said, the truth of this book rests not alone upon the testimony of the angel, but also on the truthfulness of him who sent the angel. Who is the Lord God of the holy prophets who sent his angel? The answer to this question is found in verse 16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." If there was nothing else in all the Bible to prove the deity of Jesus of Nazareth, this one verse would be sufficient. Jesus is the Lord God, a name which can be applied only to him who is God over all and blessed for ever, and who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus is the Lord God of the holy prophets; that is, the Lord who inspired the prophets to speak and write for the instruction and warning of the church. Jesus is therefore the author of the Bible. We are indebted to him not only for salvation, but also for that inspired word by which his salvation is revealed. And as Jesus, the Lord God of the holy prophets, is the author of the things which are written in this book, they must be faithful and true, and worthy of our implicit faith.

In the next place, we have the object for which these sayings were written: "To show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." This is another confirmation of the truth of this book. It was written, not to tickle the fancy, not to excite the imagination, not to deceive with false hopes, but to show the things which must shortly be done. If this was its design it must be true, for otherwise the design would not be accomplished. Each age of the world had its peculiar events, and each

generation of the servants of God, ever since the days of John, has been looking for events which were soon to come. First they looked for the spread of Christianity, and the rise and progress of the apostacy. Then they looked for the escape of the true church into the wilderness, which was to be her residence for a time, times and a half, and for the testimony, trials, death and resurrection of the two witnesses. Then they looked for the Reformation, with its open Bible. Then they looked for the judgments which were shadowed forth by the symbols which appeared under the pouring out of the vials, and which have not yet come to a full end. We who are living somewhere near the beginning of the seventh vial, are looking for the overthrow of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. Those who witness these things will look for the millennium. Those who live during the millennial period of the world's history, will look for the final judgment and the glory beyond. And so each generation has been looking for the things written in this book which were shortly to be done. No one has looked in vain. At the appointed time the predicted events have taken place. So it will continue till the last symbol is fulfilled and all the things written in this book are accomplished.

In the next place, we have the main, the central revelation of the things which are written in this book. "Behold, I come quickly." Here the angel quotes the words of the Lord God of the holy prophets who had sent him. Nothing is more clearly revealed in the Scriptures than the fact that Jesus is to come in glory the second time without sin unto salvation. Jesus himself spake of this coming when he was here on earth. The angels spake of it to the weeping disciples who were gazing from the summit of Olivet after their departing Lord. The apostles spake of it in all their inspired writings. And in no place is it spoken of more frequently than in the Apocalypse. In this book, the speedy coming of Christ is set before us as the ever-present hope of the church. In the first chapter it is said, "The time is at hand." To the church of Philadelphia it is said, "Behold, I come quickly." Three times in this concluding chapter the same words ring out like a trumpet call, "I come quickly." The accumulating centuries give accumulating interest to this word "quickly." It has greater emphasis to-day than it had yesterday; it will have greater emphasis to-morrow than it has to-day; it will have increased emphasis with every rising of the sun till it ceases to be prophetic, and the words, "the Lord cometh," will be changed into these other words, "the Lord has come."

In the next place, we have the blessedness of obedience. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." This is another confirmation of the things written in this book; for if they were not true and faithful, there could be no blessedness in keeping them. Wherein does this promised blessedness consist? It consists partly in instruction. This book contains a complete history of the church, and he is blessed

who knows that history. It consists partly in comfort. This book tells us that all the trials of the earthly saints will, at God's appointed time, end in glory, and that all their crosses will one day be exchanged for crowns. He is blessed who enjoys the comfort which grows out of this knowledge. It consists partly in encouragement. This book tells us that all the enemies of the earthly church will be destroyed, and that the church itself will be crowned with final and everlasting victory. He is blessed who is strengthened by the encouragement which grows out of this knowledge. It consists partly in the eternal reward of obedience; for of the precepts of this book, as well as of the precepts of the whole word of God it may be said, "in keeping them there is great reward."

What greater confirmation of the truth of these revelations could we ask? We have their partial fulfillment, the testimony of the holy angel, the character of their author, the object for which they were made, and the blessedness of those who obey them. Surely all this is sufficient to command our faith. Let us believe that the perpetual peace, the eternal triumph, and the heavenly glory, which are herein revealed, will come to pass. These things seem too good to be true. That unfading crowns should be set on our brows, that everlasting scepters should be placed in our hands, that our tattered rags should be exchanged for coronation robes, that we who have so long groveled in the dust and ashes should ascend the thrones of glory, all this staggers our faith. But he who remembers we are dust, and knows our weakness, has been pleased to confirm these truths, so that even we are forced to believe. Turn to the opening words of this book. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Now turn to the words we have just been considering. "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Compare one of these passages with the other; remember the evidence we have of the truth of this book, and then let us say again with humble and thankful hearts, "Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief."

II. The second thing to be considered is THE EFFECT OF THESE REVELATIONS ON THE APOSTLE. "And I John saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me,



See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book : worship God." The things which John saw and heard are the faithful and true sayings which are spoken of in the preceding verses. They refer not merely to the description of the New Jerusalem, but to all the revelations which are contained in this book. The angel who had taken such an active part in pointing out the symbols to the apostle, and in explaining their meaning, must have been clothed with a glory which was more than earthly. His glory so dazzled and bewildered the seer, that for a moment he forgets himself and his duty to his God, and falls down to worship the heavenly messenger. Or it may be that the glory was so great that the seer thought he stood before the Saviour himself. If this was his thought, it was speedily corrected. The angel forbade the worship, and revealed his true character and the true character of all those created beings who are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." He was John's fellow servant. He was engaged in the same work; he served the same Master; he glorified the same Saviour; he belonged to the great brotherhood of the prophets; that is, the brotherhood of those whose duty and privilege it was to make known the will of God. What an honor they have who are teachers of the word of the Lord, in the Sabbath school, in the home, in the church, or wherever they may have an opportunity! They are the brethren of the angels. How then can we account for the fact that men are so reluctant to engage in this duty and to inherit this honor? Whenever angels have had the privilege of instructing men and revealing the divine will, they have hastened to embrace that privilege. If permission was given them to-day, we have reason to believe that our homes, our churches, and our places of business would be filled with a great multitude of the heavenly host, and that every one would cry, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," until the sound of conversation, and the voice of preaching, and the din of labor, would be silenced by the music of the angelic invitation. We have reason to believe that to-day, before the setting of the sun, every dweller on the earth would hear of Jesus and of the eternal life which he came to purchase. But men are reluctant to undertake the work; they are unwilling to do that which the angels would delight to do. The angel also declares himself to be of the number "of them who keep the sayings of this book." He, too, was under the law of God, and bound to obey it. He was under the same obligation that the apostle was to live up to the principles of the divine government as they are laid down in the word of God, principles which are summarily comprehended in these words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

Having thus refused the worship of the bewildered apostle, the angel points him to the only true object of worship: "Worship God." It seems

strange that John should need any instruction on this point, and yet he did. He had been brought up in the Jewish church, which had learned from the long and cruel sufferings of the Babylonish captivity to hate every form of idolatry; he had been admitted to the peculiar friendship of his Saviour, and had drunk deeply of his devout teaching; and yet he was, not once, but twice, on the eve of angel worship. In chapter 19: 10 we have an exact counterpart of the scene which is here described. When the angel had made the announcement, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb," we are told, "I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren which have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." And if John was so liable to this sin, and needed repeated instruction on this point, how much more do we? We are so sinful and imperfect that we are unwilling to place our supreme affections on God, and to render him undivided service and worship.

1. One lesson which the subject of our lecture should teach us is this: The sin and folly of idol worship. If an angel is not worthy of our worship, no other created being can be. The Roman Catholic church teaches that angel worship is scriptural. Let us look at a few of the main passages which are quoted to support this doctrine. Of Balaam it is said, "He saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head and fell flat on his face." Of Joshua it is said, "He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand, \* \* \* and Joshua fell on his face and did worship." The dying Jacob said, "The angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads." But the context of all these passages clearly indicates that the angel referred to was none other than the uncreated angel of the covenant, even the Lord Jesus. On the other hand, Peter refused to be worshiped by Cornelius, Paul by the heathen, and the angel by John. The whole word of God, from the beginning to the end, is but an echo of these words with which the Saviour rebuked Satan, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

2. Another lesson which the subject of lecture teaches is, that if we refuse our belief to the word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures, we are without excuse. What better evidence of its truth could we ask than God has given us. Look at its harmony, at the fulfillment of its prophecies, at the character of the men who wrote it, at its remarkable preservation, and at the tests to which it has been put by friends and foes. If, in the face of this evidence, we do not believe, we will stand speechless on that day when we are called to render our account. In view of all this evidence, we must say of all that God has revealed, "These sayings are faithful and true." "Not one jot or tittle will pass away till all are fulfilled."

## LECTURE LXXV.

## THE UNCHANGING CONDITION OF THE DEAD.

And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.—*REV. 22: 10, 11.*

III. WE come now to the third point in the concluding part of the Apocalypse, viz., THE COMMAND TO PUBLISH the things which are written in this book. "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." This book is here called a "prophecy"; and it is so called with justice, for most of it relates to events which were future at the time when it was written. Chapters II and III, which contain the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, describe the church as it was in the days of John, but the rest of the book describes the things which were to be thereafter. As so much of this book is taken up with predictions of the future, it is properly called a prophecy. It is this book of prophecy, which the angel who had taken such a prominent part in the preceding visions commands the apostle not to conceal. The meaning of this command is not difficult to discover. It means to publish, to declare abroad. On one occasion, John was commanded to seal up the things which he had heard. In the vision which is recorded in chapter X, he saw a mighty angel, standing with one foot on the sea and the other on the dry land, and holding in his hand a little book. That angel, as we saw in our exposition of that chapter, shadowed forth the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and that little book shadowed forth the open Bible which was then given anew to the people. When the angel had cried with a loud voice, the apostle heard seven thunders. These thunders were a symbol of the anathemas and excommunications which were uttered by the Roman church from the seven-hilled city against the reformers. The apostle, like the leaders of the Reformation, at first thought that these anathemas were the voice of God, and he trembled before them. He was about to record them as the words of God, when he was told, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." As if it had been said: These anathemas are of no account; they are not the words of God; they do not reveal the will of God; they are not worthy to be written or remembered; let them be forgotten; seal them up, and write them not. This passage throws a flood of light upon the words under consideration. If the things which were to be sealed were things which were of no account, and which were not worthy to be believed, then the

things which were not to be sealed, and which were to be published abroad, must be of great importance, and worthy of all belief. Therefore this command of the angel to "seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book," is a clear intimation of their importance and their truth. If they had not been important and true, they would have been placed on the same level with the seven meaningless thunders, which the rise and progress of the Reformation called forth from Papal Rome.

But the command of the angel means something more than this. The prophet Daniel, in the old dispensation, was favored with many magnificent visions of what was to be in the future; but when the visions were concluded, he was commanded to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." Again, it was said to him, "Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." There can be no question as to the meaning of these commands. The visions which Daniel saw related to events which were yet far in the future, and which would not come to pass till the time of the end. There was, therefore, no occasion that men should, for a time, trouble themselves about these visions and their fulfillment. These visions were to be closed and sealed from the knowledge of men till the predicted time was at hand. When that predicted time was approaching and predicted events would have a practical bearing on human conduct, then the seal was to be removed and men would understand the meaning of the symbols which Daniel saw in Babylon. This passage also throws a flood of light upon the words under consideration. If the prophecies of Daniel were to be sealed because they related to things which were yet far distant, then the prophecies of this book were to be published abroad because they related to things which were near at hand. This is the chief reason for the command, and the one which is here assigned; "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." If our theory of interpretation is correct, this assigned reason is borne out by facts. Each generation of the servants of God, since these visions were seen and recorded, has had a personal interest in the events predicted; each generation has been looking for the things which were shortly to come to pass. Some of the things written in this book have been at hand for all those who have lived at any time since the organization of the Christian church; some of them will be at hand for all those who will live till the end comes. This is what is meant by the angel's command. It teaches us, in the first place, that the sayings of the prophecy of this book are important, and worthy to be recorded, believed and obeyed; it teaches us, in the second place, that these sayings, at least some of them, relate to events which are at hand, in which we are personally interested, and of which we should have a clear knowledge.

What are the things which are at hand for us? The time of terrible

judgments is at hand. The three great powers of Antichrist, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, have not yet been destroyed. They seem to be trembling on their thrones, and their hold on the bodies and souls of men seems to be growing weaker; but they will not resign their thrones or lessen their hold without some final efforts to retain what they have, and to regain what they have lost. There is reason to believe that these efforts will scar the earth with many graves and rend the church with many trials. These prophetic utterances point us to the battle of Armageddon, and to the gathering of the hosts of Gog and Magog. If we mistake not, the signs of the coming storm are even now upon us. The nations of the earth seem to be waiting in breathless silence, not knowing from what direction the threatening tempest will burst upon them. In the midst of the silence we can almost hear the approaching footsteps of the coming conqueror; we can almost distinguish the words of his proclamation, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, till he come whose right it is to reign."

A time of trial is at hand. The wheat of the church is to be winnowed; the vine of the church is to be pruned; the gold of the church is to be tried as in the fire. Great and plausible delusions will be preached, which, if possible, would deceive the very elect; false systems of theology will be proclaimed; eternal truths will be denied; the inspired word will be called a fable; the divine Redeemer will be laughed at as a myth. Under the influence of these trials and delusions many will make shipwreck of their faith.

A time of separation is at hand. By means of these trials and judgments the lines between the friends and foes of God will be more sharply drawn. The mark of the beast on the forehead of his servants will be clearly revealed; the name of Jesus on the forehead of his servants will shine with increasing brightness. Even now the opposing hosts are putting on their uniform, whose colors are as different as light is from darkness. Every soldier is stepping to his place. Every battalion is entrenching itself in its position. At any hour the thunder and the carnage may begin. While we wait there is little danger of mistaking the individuals who compose the hostile armies, for the world is manifestly preparing for its doom, and the church is manifestly preparing for its glory.

A time of judgment, of trial, and of separation is at hand. Because such a time is at hand, the sayings of the prophecy of this book should be published abroad. They should be proclaimed to the church, for in the coming judgments and trials the church will need the instruction, and the comfort, and the encouragement, which can be derived only from the sayings of this book. They should be proclaimed to the world, for the world needs the warnings and the exhortations which are to be found only in this book. They should be proclaimed to individuals, for they have an important bearing on the individual life. They call to us like a voice from

heaven, saying, "Who is on the Lord's side"? What reply do we make? Are we clothed with white robes? Have we washed them and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? Are we singing the new song of the redeemed? Are we following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth? Will we be among the dead who die in the Lord and who rest from their labors? Have we accepted the invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and have we put on our wedding garments? Is the prediction of the Saviour's second coming as music to our listening ears?

Surely, then, the church has need, the world has need, we have need that the sayings of the prophecy of this book should be proclaimed; for it is only through the hearing and the believing of these sayings that we can hope to be in readiness for the eventful future. And herein is an excuse, if any excuse is needed, for our attempt to explain the things which are written in this book. We have tried to unseal these sayings, so far as our ignorance and inexperience have sealed them; we have tried to make known what God intended us to know. How imperfectly we have succeeded, no one knows better than he who has made the attempt. Still we have reason to hope that our efforts have not been entirely in vain. We have succeeded in making some things plainer than they were before, and in bringing some things home to our hearts. In view of the lessons we have learned, in view of the comfort we have enjoyed, in view of the encouragement we have felt, we may be thankful that John was not commanded, like Daniel, to seal up the visions he was permitted to witness, and that, in accordance with the angel's command, the things written in this book have been proclaimed in order to prepare us for the time which is at hand.

IV. The next thing in this concluding part of the Apocalypse is the solemn announcement that when the predicted time comes, and the events written in this book are fulfilled, **EVERYTHING WILL BE FIXED AND UNCHANGEABLE**. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Let it be noticed that there is now a change in the speaker. Up to this time, the angel had been speaking to the apostle; but now he retires and gives place to one who is far more glorious than the angel, even the Lord Jesus himself. If we paid heed to the words of the angel, how much greater heed should we pay to the words of the Lord! That the Lord is the speaker now, is evident from the following-verse. It is the Lord who says, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"; for it is the judgment seat of Christ before which we all must stand. It is the Lord who says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last"; for Christ alone has a name which is above every name. These words, then, must be pondered, not as the words of the angel, but as the words of Christ Jesus.

It is manifest that these words refer to the future, to what is beyond the judgment, for in the present order of things, there is no such unchangeableness as is here described. Change is written on everything earthly. Day and night, summer and winter follow each other in rapid succession, and each clothes the dwelling place of man with its peculiar garb. Man himself is continually changing. The child becomes the man, and the man goes down into his second childhood; the ignorant become learned, and the learned forget their learning; the poor become rich, and the rich are reduced to want; the unholy become the saints of God, and the saints of God are betrayed into aggravated sin. There are changes without number in every human home and in every human heart. But at the judgment the destiny of all will be fixed. Then there will be no rising or setting of the sun to mark the progress of the years; there will be either endless day or endless night. No sinners will then be converted, and no saints will then fall into sin. All things will continue as they were. He that is unjust will be unjust still, and he that is holy will be holy still.

The human race is here divided into two classes, the servants of Satan, and the servants of God. The former are described by two words, "unjust," and "filthy." An unjust man is not one who is unjust merely towards his fellow men, but one who is also unjust toward God; one who refuses to obey the commandments, and to believe the words of God. A filthy man is one who is full of moral defilement and pollution, one who is impure in heart and life. This word *filthy* is often used in Scripture to describe the sinner. Job says, "How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water"? David says, "They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy." The apostle says, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh." There can then be no doubt as to the persons described by the words, unjust and filthy. They are those who live and die in unbelief and sin. And it is asserted that at the judgment the condition of these will be fixed and unchangeable. Those who are unjust and filthy, will be unjust and filthy still. These calm words give us one fearful glimpse of future woe. We need say nothing now of the material elements of the misery of the lost; we need not try to explain what is meant by the fire which is never quenched, and by the worm which never dies. It is obvious that the great agony of the hereafter is a moral one; that it is not so much physical pain as mental suffering which will cause the weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. We sometimes see a foretaste of this suffering on this side of the grave. There is the avaricious man, whose hoarded wealth has been swept away, and whose acquisitiveness, retaining all its former power, can no longer be gratified; in his self-reproaches, unsatisfied longings, impotent endeavors, and bitter curses, we see the beginning of the eternal punishment. See the man who is the victim of his appetite and the slave of intoxicating drink, when that terri-

ble disease which is the result of alcoholic influence lays its hand upon him; the weakened nervous system calls for stimulants; the appetite demands to be gratified; but inward fire burns and blisters; a thousand demons in most hideous form crawl over his shrinking flesh; and in his unutterable agony we see the beginning of the eternal punishment. So it is with revenge, and wrath, and shame, and lust, and all those passions which are seen and felt on earth. Let these passions continue in their power, let their results have full growth, let all opportunities for gratifying them be removed, let every restraining influence be taken away, and we have a place of torment, whose agony is feebly described by the quenchless fire and the undying worm. In comparison with such agony, physical pain, however severe, would be a bed of down. And this is what is here described. Every one is now shaping his eternal destiny. What he is now sowing he will hereafter reap. He is kindling a fire which will glow, and burn, and blister for ever. He is nourishing a worm which will gnaw and poison. Every sin he commits will haunt him hereafter. Hell, in this view of it, is not the creation of God; it is that torment which every sinner is preparing for himself; for the sinner's future is thus described and linked to his present by the Saviour himself: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."

Let us now turn to the other side of this picture, and notice the future of the servants of God. "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." As two words are employed to describe the servants of Satan, so two words are employed to describe the servants of God. Every heir of heaven has, must have, a twofold righteousness; a righteousness imputed, and a righteousness inwrought; a righteousness external, and a righteousness internal. The first is the act of Christ; the other is the work of the Spirit. The first gives the man his title to heaven; the other, his fitness for heaven. The first is here described as righteousness; the other, as holiness. These are twin graces. They cannot exist apart. Where one is, the other must be. God gives no one a title to heaven whom he does not fit for heaven; God fits no one for heaven to whom he does not give a title. It is here asserted that the man, who is thus righteous and holy on earth, will at the judgment be fixed in righteousness and holiness for ever. And this future righteousness and holiness will be only the ripened fruit of the seed sown here. Present faith, and love, and obedience, and joy will all be brought to their full development. Holiness is not a mere preparation for heaven; it is heaven itself; it is the essence of salvation; it is joy for evermore.

1. How many solemn thoughts do these words of the Saviour bring to our remembrance? Here is, in the first place, a warning for the unbeliever and an encouragement for the believer. The one is preparing for himself future torment. Every sin, unless repented of and pardoned, is as seed



sown, which will yield a hundredfold. Every evil thought, every evil word, and every evil action will be a poisoned thorn hereafter. If this is so, and we are to believe it, not on the testimony of man, but on the testimony of him who cannot lie, every man should hold his sins and passions under restraint. We have learned from bitter experience that we cannot do this of ourselves; we must come to him who is able and willing to help, and suffer him to bear our sins, and to impart to us his righteousness. On the other hand there is encouragement to the believer. He is, through divine grace, preparing a heaven for himself. He is laying the foundations of the New Jerusalem, building its jasper walls, and planting its trees of life. Surely here is encouragement for us to try to overcome our sins and to obey the will of God.

2. These words suggest the intimate relation which exists between time and eternity. The one is the flower, the other is the ripened fruit; the one is the twilight, the other is the everlasting noonday or the everlasting midnight. Herein we often mistake. We think that heaven and hell are something vastly different from the present; and so they are, in many respects; yet in another respect, they are the outgrowth, the continuation and development of present experiences. The one is but unchanging holiness and righteousness; the other is but unchanging injustice and filthiness.

3. These words suggest the true position of death in the plan of human life. It is the end of the present existence, and the beginning of the future. It is the divinely appointed province of death to set the seal of immutability on man's earthly character, so that the holy will be holy still, and the filthy will be filthy still.

4. These words suggest that there is a time in every man's life when any change in his spiritual condition will be impossible. He will find no place of repentance, though he seeks it carefully with tears. "The night cometh, when no man can work."

## LECTURE LXXVI.

### THE SAVIOUR'S COMING AND REWARD.

And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.—REV. 22: 12, 13.

ONE day in the history of the world is, for the most part, like every other day. The sun rises, darkness is driven away, man comes forth to his labor, the shadows of evening gather around him, and weary and worn he

betakes himself to his rest. With every returning day, there is about the same number of funeral services and marriage ceremonies, about the same number of breaking hearts and radiant smiles. To individuals, there is a great difference in days; but to the race, one day is like every other day. The words which described the world yesterday will describe it to-day; the description which is true to-day will be true to-morrow. Nevertheless, there are days in the history of the world which stand out in unmistakable prominence, which have exerted a potent influence through succeeding generations, and in which the human race passed through one of those crises which changed the direction of all its future. Such was the day of creation, when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. Such was the day of the original transgression, when the father of all the living violated the divine commandment, and forfeited for himself and for his posterity the divine friendship. Such was the day when the waters of the deluge were let loose, and Noah was saved, to be the second father of the race. Such was the day when Abraham was chosen as the heir of the blessings of the covenant. Such was the day when Jesus was born, and ancient Bethlehem heard the new song of the heavenly host. Such was the day when Jesus died, and by his death "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage." And there is to be at least one other such eventful day in the future history of the world, even the day of judgment, when the universe will be gathered to hear its doom. This day is often referred to, and sometimes described with great minuteness in the Scriptures. This is the event which is announced in the subject of the present lecture. "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

To this portion of the concluding division of the Apocalypse let us turn our attention. We are not to think that this is the only announcement of the judgment which is made in this book. In chapter 20:11-13, its eventful scenes are vividly pictured. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." We are pointed to the same mighty gathering in other places. And this is what might be expected. If this book contains the history of the church from the days of John until the end, the day of judgment must, of necessity, occupy a prominent

place in its descriptions. We would especially expect that in these solemn words of conclusion, the attention of every student of the sayings of the prophecy of this book would be turned to the last great day of the world's history, that he might be moved with the warnings and encouragements which such a day must suggest. Our expectations are not disappointed. In the graphic words under consideration, the assembled universe, the distribution of rewards and punishments, and the person of the Judge, are all made to pass before us, and they cry, like a trumpet call from heaven, "Prepare to meet thy God." It is to be remembered that the speaker is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Lord Jesus who announces his speedy coming, whose province it is to sit on the throne of judgment and to give to every one his reward, and who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. We are, therefore, to study these words as the words of him who spake as man never spake.

I. The first thing in these words to be noted and remembered is **THE CERTAINTY AND THE NEARNESS OF THE JUDGMENT**. "Behold, I come quickly." These words, or words equivalent in meaning, are repeated again and again in this book. In the introduction it is said, "The time is at hand." To the angel of the church of Philadelphia it is said, "Behold, I come quickly." Three times in this concluding chapter, the same words ring out like a voice from heaven: "I come quickly"; "Behold, I come quickly"; "Surely, I come quickly." What is meant by this word "quickly"? Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the Saviour said, with repeated emphasis, "Behold, I come quickly," and he has not come yet. Has this long lapse of time shown this word of inspiration to be false? By no means. It was true then, and it is true now, that the Saviour is coming quickly. It is true with regard to every individual, for the day of his death is to him virtually the day of judgment. No sooner does the heart cease its throbbing, and the dust return to the earth as it was, than the spirit goes to God who gave it. That spirit is then, in what may be called, for want of a better comparison, a kind of a preliminary examination, acquitted and admitted into joy, or condemned and driven into darkness. In one or the other of these conditions, it remains till the resurrection. Then the body and spirit are united, and the man stands with the rest of the universe at the bar of the final judgment, and the acquittal or the condemnation is publicly proclaimed, and he enters the perfect happiness of glory, or the perfect misery of the lost. This we are taught in the Westminster catechism, and we believe its teaching to be in harmony with the word of God. "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory; their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in their graves till the resurrection." "At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be

openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity." If this is so, then the day of every man's death is to him virtually the day of judgment. As the day of death is ever at hand, as it is distant at the very utmost only three or four score of years, it is in perfect accordance with truth to speak of the day of judgment as coming quickly. In less than fifty years the most of us will have passed into eternity; in less than one hundred years, not one of us will be waiting on earth for the second coming of the Son of man. Surely, then, it becomes us to hear and heed the words of the Master, "Behold, I come quickly."

More than this: in the estimation of him with whom one day is as a thousand years, the day of judgment is at hand. When we compare the comparatively few years which must elapse before the mission of the earthly church is completed, and the earth that is now is melted with fervent heat, and the heavens that are now are rolled together as a scroll, and the unending ages of eternal duration, it is surely right to say that the day of judgment is at hand. Only a few more ticks in the machinery that regulates the universe, only a few more movements of the hands on the dial plate which marks the progress of events in the plans of God, and the hour of doom will be struck, and the human race will spring from its long slumber in the grave to welcome the dawn of the eternal day.

The day of judgment is not only at hand; its coming is certain. In proof of this, we need only point to the Scriptures. Nothing is more clearly revealed than the fact that we must all be judged. Time would fail us to repeat passages which bear on this point. Let this one suffice: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." And though the believer in inspiration needs no other proof than this, it may be well to say that the teaching of the Scriptures in this regard is confirmed by our reason. It is evident to every man, that the good sometimes suffer, and the wicked sometimes triumph in this world. It is also evident that this would be inconsistent with justice if there was not to be a day when all that is wrong would be righted, and when all that is holy will be rewarded. If, therefore, there is a God who is the just Governor of the universe, there must be a day of judgment. In this, then, as in everything else, revelation and reason are in harmony. They both point to the coming of Christ in judgment.

II. The next thing which claims our attention is THE PERSONS TO BE JUDGED. If there is to be a final trial, who are to be arrayed at the bar? This question is answered in the words before us, "To give to every man according as his work shall be." A similar answer is returned to this question in other passages of Holy Writ. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon

the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations." It is to be a universal judgment. Not one of all the human family will be so humble that he will be overlooked; not one will be so exalted that he will be excused. All who are then alive will be caught up to the judgment seat. All who are then sleeping the sleep of death will be raised from their slumber to receive their reward. Abel will be there, who first crossed the river, and thus became the leader of the mighty multitude of the dead; and the latest born of all the sons of Adam will stand by his side. Abraham will be there, and the least of all the faithful ones of whom he is the spiritual father will stand at his side. Noah and the antediluvians to whom he preached, Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom among whom he lived, Moses and that Pharaoh whom he so often withstood face to face, Joshua and the unholy dwellers in Canaan whom he conquered, David and Saul, his rival in the kingdom, Nicodemus and Mary Magdalene, and all those whose names are recorded in the Scriptures, and with whose lives the Scriptures have made us familiar, will cluster around the judgment seat. And those whose names are recorded in no history, and whose very existence has been forgotten, will all stand before the throne. "The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels"; and when the Lord of the harvest sends forth his angels, every sheaf will be found, and will be brought either to the garner or to the burning. The pyramids of Egypt will be overthrown, and the long line of kings who have been sleeping beneath them will come forth; the catacombs of Rome will hear the archangel's trumpet, and Christian and pagan, who have rested in peace through many long centuries, will spring to their feet; the sepulchers of the Holy Land will be opened, and patriarch and prophet, king and priest, will stand once more on the hills of their promised land; the depths of the sea will be astonished as the shipwrecked of all time move through the coral groves towards the appointed place of gathering; the cemeteries of Christendom will all at once be crowded with the living; and all will march with angel music to the skies. And what is of more importance to us, we will be there. No matter when we die or where we are buried, there is no danger that we will be overlooked. Then, for the first and last time, will all the members of all the families of earth be united in one congregation. "My reward is with me, to give to *every man* according as his work shall be."

III. The next thing which claims our attention is THE MANNER OF THE JUDGMENT. We are not to suppose that on that last and great day of the world's history there will be the regular and formal proceedings of a court of justice. That day is described as a day of judgment, and the throne of Christ is described as a throne of judgment, to give us a vivid idea of what will then take place. Here, as in many other places, the Scriptures compare heavenly and unseen things with earthly and visible things, for the

only way we can understand the former is through the latter. We may therefore keep before our minds the figure which is so common in the word of God. There will be a great white throne, and on it the Judge will be seated in all the majesty of his ineffable glory. Before that throne the universe will be gathered, and the trial begins. Some are acquitted, and enter the inheritance prepared for them. Some are condemned, and are driven away to their punishment. This acquittal and this condemnation will be according to every man's work. Of course, no man will be acquitted because of his works. We are clearly taught in the Scriptures that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his presence. But though the deeds of the law are not the grounds of justification, they are the evidences of justification. They are so regarded on the earth. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." They are so regarded on the day of judgment. In that most minute description of the judgment day which is contained in Matt. 25, we are told that the rule by which men will enter the kingdom, or depart from the presence of the King is, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." Of a similar import are many other passages which might be quoted. "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment." "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Every man who is acquitted will be acquitted because he is united to Christ by a living faith. Every one who is condemned will be condemned because he did not believe on the name of the Son of God. Though God will acquit the one because of his faith and condemn the other because of his unbelief, yet he will vindicate his decision by the visible and tangible evidences of such faith and unbelief. The books will be opened, the words and works of men will be revealed, and they will be judged according to the evidence of these words and works; so that the assembled universe, seeing this evidence, will be able to see and say in every case, "Just and righteous are thy judgments, thou King of saints." In the light of these passages we will have no difficulty in understanding the Saviour, when he speaks of the *reward* which he will give to every one according to his works. Heaven may be called a reward, but it is a reward of grace, and not of merit. Heaven is not a reward in the accurate meaning of that term, for when we have done all, we have done only what it was our duty to do, and we are still

unprofitable servants. Heaven is ours, not because we have merited it, but because we have inherited it. It is the gift and legacy of our heavenly Father. Nevertheless, as a man's future is to be decided upon the evidence of his works, that future may in one sense be called a reward, for it is in proportion to his works. Inasmuch as the words we speak and the works we do are to play such an important part on the day of judgment, what manner of persons ought we to be? Are we willing that our thoughts, words and actions should be publicly proclaimed? Are we willing that our eternal destiny should rest upon the testimony which these witnesses are giving? We would not be understood as underrating the value of faith in the economy of salvation. We know that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified, and that it is by faith alone we become united to Christ and heirs of his kingdom; but we also know that every man will be judged according to his works, that his works will follow him to the judgment, and that he will be acquitted or condemned according to the deeds done in the body. Do not say that the gospel doctrine of justification by faith leads to sin. The words of the Saviour, "My reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be," will inspire us, if anything can, to live holily and justly as we journey on through the world toward the judgment seat before which we must all stand.

IV. The last thing which claims our attention here is **THE PERSON OF THE JUDGE**. "Behold, I come quickly." "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." There can be no doubt that the Lord Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, is here described. The testimony of the Scriptures is uniform on this point. Listen to a few of the plain declarations of inspiration: "The Son of man shall send his angels with the sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other." "The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." "The Father has committed all judgment to the Son." "Jesus was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead." "God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained." "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "The Lord Jesus shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his coming."

Little need be said in this connection with regard to the meaning of the words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." They have been explained in previous lectures, for this is not the first time we have found them in the Apocalypse. Even if they had not been already explained, their meaning is obvious. They reveal the deity

of the Judge. He who is the first and the last must be from everlasting to everlasting, God over all, blessed for ever.

The coming of Christ as Judge will differ widely from his coming as the Saviour. As the Saviour, he came in humility; as the Judge, he will come in glory. His first coming was almost unknown; few of all those he came to save knew of the child in the stable of Bethlehem; when he comes the second time his presence will shine forth like the lightning from the one end of heaven to the other. As the Saviour, he came under the burden of imputed sin; as the Judge, he will come without sin unto salvation. As the Saviour, he came with hardly a heavenly attendant; as the Judge, he will come with all his holy angels. As the Saviour, he was rejected by the multitudes; as the Judge, all will acknowledge his power. As this is to be the manner of his coming, and as he who is to come as Judge is the omnipotent and omniscient God, and as the thought crowds upon us that we are to be present on that day, and are to have a personal interest in its proceedings, what an inspiration we have to live holily and justly that we may render our account with joy and not with grief!

Among the practical thoughts suggested are the following: 1. The fact that Jesus is to be our Judge, must encourage the believer and startle the unbeliever. 2. There is an intimate connection between this life and the next. The works of this world follow us into the world to come. 3. There are degrees in glory. Every man's final judgment will be according to his works; and therefore, as "one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." 4. We should be diligent in our striving for holiness. If our works are to be the evidences of our justification, with what care should we prepare that evidence? How appropriate for us is the exhortation of Peter; "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness"? We have heard the Saviour saying again and again through his word, "Behold, I come quickly." "Wherefore, beloved," to quote again the language of the same apostle, "seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

## LECTURE LXXVII.

### THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.—REV. 22: 14-16.



THE description of the heavenly Jerusalem which is contained in this book, is full of interest to every devout reader. How our hearts are stirred within us, as we behold the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off! How our hopes brighten, as we see the jasper walls, as we hear the murmur of the sweetly flowing river, and as we stand beneath the shadow of the tree of life! But there is something of more surpassing interest, and of greater importance; and that is, the character of those who shall enter the city and enjoy its beauty, and the character of those against whom its gates of pearl will be shut for ever. On these points we are not left in ignorance. In these concluding chapters, our attention is called to them again and again. The character of those who will enter, and of those who will not enter, is so frequently and so plainly described, that there can be no doubt here. It is so clearly revealed, that we ought to be able to determine, even now, to which of these classes we belong. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." "The nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it." "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Of a similar import are those words which, in the course of our exposition, claim our attention. Though the character and blessedness of those who will enter the city, and the character and misery of those who will not enter, have been considered once and again in our previous lectures, these themes are of so much importance that they must not be passed over lightly. As we consider these themes, let this question be ever present: am I one who will enter through the gates into the city, or am I one of those who will be left out for ever?

I. THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN: who are they? And wherein does their blessedness consist? These questions are answered in the verse which begins the subject of the present lecture. Who are the inhabitants of heaven? "They that do his commandments." Wherein does their blessedness consist? "That they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." The inhabitants of heaven are here described by their lives and actions. "They do his commandments." They are described in a similar way elsewhere in the word of God. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Obedience is the prominent and visible characteristic of the people

of God, obedience which is intelligent, and not ignorant and superstitious; which is impartial, and not confined to parts of the divine law; which is steady and life-long, and not by fits and starts; which is dependent on divine, and not on human help. Is there need of a caution here? Do we seem to teach that our obedience is the ground of our sonship? If so, we hasten to deny such an intention. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." The ground of our justification is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but our obedience is the evidence. By this shall all men know that we are his disciples. By this shall we ourselves know that we are his disciples. By this shall it be known that we are his disciples at the day of judgment. We ought, therefore, to be able to determine, even now, whether we are among the number of those who have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. The whole matter is reduced to one simple question, which no learning can make plainer, and which no metaphysics should mystify; are we sincerely trying to keep God's commandments? Prominent among these commandments are these: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "This do in remembrance of me." If we are trying to keep the commandments, we may rest with confidence in the hope of the promised inheritance. We will eat of the tree of life. Our motto now may be, and our experience hereafter will be, "Through the gates into the city."

But though the words under consideration are in harmony with other parts of the Scriptures, and though they convey to us most profitable instruction, we cannot refrain from saying that their right to a place in the sacred Scriptures is justly questioned. We would weaken no man's reverence for our most admirable translation of the Bible. It is as nearly perfect as any human work can be. But the most imperfect part of this translation is to be found in the concluding chapters of the Apocalypse. The reason of this was stated at length in a previous lecture.

The variations between the received text and the Sinaitic Codex are in a great majority of instances of no account; they consist largely in omitting or supplying unimportant words, or in a slight change in the order; but some of them are of considerable importance. When there is an important variation, Biblical scholars are of the opinion that the Sinaitic manuscript should be followed in preference to the received text. In the passage before us it is to be found one of the more important variations. In the received text, it reads "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life." In both the Alexandrian and Sinaitic manuscripts it reads "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life." The received text places the right to the tree of life on obedience; and this is true, so far as obedience is evidence of that

right. But the manuscripts trace the right to the tree of life directly to the atonement of Christ, and to the interest of the saints in that atonement, an interest which is described elsewhere in this book by the words, "washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb." Therefore, the authority of the manuscripts, the similar expressions to be found elsewhere in the Apocalypse, and the harmony between this reading and other passages of Scripture, lead us to believe that the correct reading of the verse before us is, "Blessed are they that have washed their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

This is the description of those who are the inhabitants of heaven. They are those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb; that is, they have accepted Jesus as the Lamb of God, who died for them, and his righteousness is imputed to them and received by faith alone. And then, as an evidence that they have received this imputed righteousness, they do the commandments of God. Every heir of heaven must have this twofold righteousness, a righteousness imputed, and a righteousness imparted. If this is so, then this still remains the sole question in our self-examination: are we sincerely trying to keep the commandments of God? If we are, we may be sure that our robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb. And if our robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we may be sure that we have a right and title to the tree of life. In other words, if the Spirit is working out our sanctification, we may be sure that the Saviour has wrought out our salvation, and that when the end comes, that salvation will be brought to its full perfection in glory. Permit us, then, once more to ask the solemn question: are we the heirs of heaven? Or, to put the question in a simpler form: have we washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb? Or, to put the question in a still more simple form, which cannot be misunderstood: are we trying to keep the commandments of God? If we are, we may be sure of the tree of life and an entrance into the city of God.

Wherein does the happiness of the inhabitants of heaven consist? In the first place, they have a right to the tree of life. The word translated "right" is the same word which is translated "power" in the well known passage, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." The latter passage is a good explanation of the former. The future of the saints is their right, not because they have merited it, but because it is a reward of grace which has been given to them, and which they have received power to accept. The tree of life need not be particularly described. We have not forgotten the beautiful description contained in verse 2: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." The saints in glory will be permitted to approach this tree at all times. No flaming sword will keep them at a distance.

They can stand beneath its shadow ; they can eat of its ripened fruit. And as they eat they will grow in strength and in life; they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint. What a difference is here unfolded between the present and the future! Now we count ourselves happy if we can reach an occasional taste of the heavenly fruit ; then neither human weakness nor angelic sword will keep us back from the full enjoyment of that tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

The blessedness of the heirs of heaven consists also in this : "That they may enter in through the gates into the city." The city is the city of the New Jerusalem. The gates are the gates of pearl. Its beauty and glory are described at length in the preceding context. Those who have the right through the washing of their robes to enter that city through those gates, shall inherit all that beauty and all that glory. They will be delivered from all sorrow, and danger, and death, and sin. All tears will be wiped away from their eyes, and they will reign for ever and ever. What an inspiring motto might these words, "Through the gates into the city," be for every member of the church militant! As he enters into temptation, let him cry, "Through the gates into the city," and courage will inspire his heart and strengthen his arm. As he enters the dark night of sorrow, let him cry, "Through the gates into the city." As he goes down into the valley of the shadow of death, still let him cry, "Through the gates into the city." If, in all the afflictions of his earthly pilgrimage, he can take this for his watchword and battle cry, then those who stand beside his lifeless body after his last conflict has ended, can say of him, with unshaken confidence and sweetest comfort, "Through the gates into the city."

II. Let us now turn to THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT, as it is described in verse 15. "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." The first ones mentioned are described as "dogs"; that is, the lawless, the depraved, the vile. To the Jews, the dog was an unclean animal, and it is uniformly spoken of in the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testaments, as a symbol of the wicked. And the dogs of Eastern cities, knowing no master, prowling about the streets, fighting among themselves, howling through all the hours of the night, and stealing everything within their reach, are an appropriate symbol of the lawless and the vile. Such vile and lawless ones will have no place in the New Jerusalem. Neither will "sorcerers," who deceive themselves and others with pretended miracles and revelations, who turn away from the holy word to follow plans of their own devising, and from the Holy Spirit to consult the spirits of demons. Neither will "whoremongers," who trifle with impurity, despise the divine ordinance of marriage, undermine the family re-

lation, and follow after her whose house is filled with the dead, and whose steps take hold on hell. Neither will "murderers," who in thought or in deed dip their hands in human blood. Neither will "idolaters," who change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things, and who in any manner strip God of his honor, and give to any other the worship which is due to him alone. Neither will those who "love and make a lie"; that is, all those who are false to themselves, to others, and to God; who take pleasure in thinking, or saying, or doing that which is false.

On the characters described in this verse, we need not dwell at greater length. It is a fearful catalogue. How many of the sons and daughters of the human family does it embrace? It embraces all those whose robes are not washed in the blood of the Lamb, and who do not give evidence of this in a sincere endeavor after new obedience; it embraces not only those who in outward act are guilty of the crimes here described, but also those who in thought or intention are guilty of these crimes. Are we included in this catalogue? This is the all-important question. It is a question which we ought to be able to answer. To answer it we do not have to do impossible things, or to solve impossible problems; we do not have to ascend into heaven or to descend into hell. The whole matter resolves itself into this one question, which in the course of the present lecture has once and again been rung in our ears, are we sincerely trying to keep the commandments of God? If we are not, we must be counted with the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the whoremongers, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and those who love and make a lie. What associates these are! God grant that they may not be our companions through the unending ages of eternity! And why need they be? The gates of the New Jerusalem are yet open; the invitation is yet extended; the Saviour yet waits to be gracious. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ; as though Christ did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

III. Yes, ambassadors for Christ! What an honor! What a fearful responsibility! Who is sufficient for these things? And yet there is no need of fear. Neither ministers, nor the apostle John, nor even the angel would have any right to speak of these things, except as they are commissioned by Jesus. And this is the last point contained in the subject of lecture. In the preceding verses, the race was divided into two classes; those who have washed their robes, and those who have disobeyed the divine commandments. It was declared that the former would enter through the gates into the city, and that the latter would be left out. To increase the solemnity of these declarations, Jesus announces himself as THE AUTHOR OF THESE STATEMENTS, and plainly tells us who he is. "I

Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." This announcement refers not only to the immediate context, but to all the things written in this book. Jesus is the author of them all, and, therefore, they must be true. Many of these things were spoken by the angel, but that angel was sent by Jesus for this very purpose. This angel was sent to reveal these things to "the churches," not to the seven churches of Asia alone, but to all the churches of Christ till the end of time. Therefore, they have come to us. In the revelations of this book, whether we are able fully to understand them or not, we are to recognize the words of Jesus, and not the words of the angel.

Who is this Jesus, to whom we are indebted for these glorious revelations? He himself answers: "I am the root and the offspring of David"; that is, the Saviour promised in the Old Testament, to whom type and sacrifice pointed, and of whom prophets spake. Of all the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament, none are more glorious than those which declare that this Saviour was to be the root-shoot and offspring of David. All these prophetic utterances are thus summed up by Isaiah: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." In the words before us, Jesus declares himself to be that stem and that branch. More than this: Jesus is also "the bright and morning star." A star is a scriptural symbol of a prince or leader; and Jesus is the prince and leader of the sacramental hosts of God's elect. The morning star is beautiful; so Jesus is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. The morning star stands without a rival in its glory; so Jesus is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. The morning star is the first thing which arrests the attention in the morning, and the last thing in the evening; so Jesus is all in all to the believing soul.

This is Jesus, the author of the Apocalypse, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, and the unfading hope of the New Testament saints. This book is distinguished from all the other books of the Bible, not only in its beauty, its sublimity, and its descriptions of the future, but also in the fact that Jesus so often and so unequivocally proclaims himself its author. It then becomes us to hear, believe and obey the things which are written in this book, not as the words of man, but as the words of the living God. To help our faith, we may well pray, "Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief." To help our obedience, we may well remember and consider the words which have been the subject of our meditation, "Blessed are they that have washed their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

## LECTURE LXXVIII.

## THE INVITATION.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—REV. 22 : 17.

THESE are among the most beautiful words of the Bible. They would have been beautiful anywhere, in the prophets or in the psalms, in the gospels or in the epistles ; but their beauty is enhanced by the position they occupy. . They stand at the very close of the book of inspiration ; they follow the sublime description of the New Jerusalem and the river of life. The text is a gem, so precious and brilliant, that it would have a beauty even in the plainest setting, but, set as it is in these revelations of the glory of the hereafter, its preciousness and brilliancy are without a parallel. In order to appreciate it, we must gather up in our minds all we have seen and heard in the preceding context. Yonder stands the holy city, with its sorrowless and deathless inhabitants, with its jasper walls and its gates of pearl, with its endless day and its everlasting worship, with its spotless purity and its eternal joy. Can we enter ? Is there any invitation for such sinners as we are ? Lo, over the portals of the city, it is written, "Come every one that will." Yonder is the river of life, flowing in rich abundance, and giving life to every one that tastes. Can we taste ? Is there any invitation for such dying sinners as we are ? Lo, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The description of the heavenly glory would only have mocked and tantalized the dwellers on the earth if it had not been followed by this gracious invitation.

There are two prominent thoughts in these words, viz., the persons who are invited, and those by whom the invitation is extended. Before proceeding to discuss these points, it may be well to say a few words concerning the invitation itself. It is an invitation to enter heaven, to drink of the river of the water of life which ever flows beside the throne of God and of the Lamb, and to enjoy the fullness of the blessedness which God has prepared for them that love him. It is an invitation to accept salvation, which begins on earth and reaches its perfection in glory. In other words, it is an invitation to believe on Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel ; for Christ is the only door which leads to the city of the Great King, and faith is the only key which unlocks that door and permits us to enter in through the gates into the city. The words of the text, translated from figurative to literal language are these, which are so often repeated in the written word : "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

I. Bearing this in mind, let us inquire, WHO ARE INVITED? When we remember that salvation includes peace, and pardon, and hope, and joy here, and sinless and eternal felicity hereafter, we may well ask, can such an invitation be for us? We come so far short in understanding the infinite love of God, and we are so accustomed to measure that love by our own imperfect love, that we are unable to comprehend a universal invitation. Nevertheless, the invitation is universal. It is addressed to every individual of our fallen race. It is true, the name of no one is recorded in the invitation, but the condition of all is so clearly described that there can be no possibility of mistake.

In the first place, the invitation is to every one that is athirst. "Let him that is athirst come." We all know what natural thirst is, and that it is not natural thirst which is referred to here. What mental or moral longing is there which bears so close a resemblance to natural thirst that it is called by this name? Every one has within him a deep sense of dissatisfaction and unrest—"an aching void" which longs for something to supply it. We appeal to every man: Do you not feel that there is something wanting to make you perfectly happy? Do you not occasionally long for that something with a longing which is akin to thirst, and which is to the soul what thirst is to the body? The man does not live who is without personal experience of this want and this longing. You will therefore observe that these words are not addressed to Christians, as such, who thirst for the living water of the gospel, but to all men who are without Christ, and who need to be saved. Every man, without exception, has more or less of this figurative thirst. Nothing but this figurative thirst will account for the toiling and striving which we see under the sun. It is to satisfy this thirst that every man is running with untiring feet, and laboring with unceasing hand, if perchance he can find something which will give him a better peace than any he has yet found. It is to satisfy this thirst that one strives for political honor; that another travels over every land and sails over every sea; that another watches sleeplessly the ups and downs of stocks and the movements of the market; that another indulges in every form of pleasure; and that another drinks of the intoxicating cup. But none of these things gives full satisfaction. It is written on thrones, and riches, and pleasures, and everything earthly, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." But the experience of unnumbered thousands confirms this declaration of the Master: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." If these things are so, then all men are athirst—then you are athirst. Is it not so? Have you not felt that want and that longing which we have tried to describe? To deny it would be to deny your humanity. Therefore this invitation of the text is addressed to you. It tells how your thirst can be quenched, your want supplied, and your longing gratified. If



you say, I have no want to be supplied, no longing to be gratified ; I have all I can desire ; I am perfectly happy ; then we have no message for you. But if you have this desire for something you do not already possess, if you long for greater happiness than you presently enjoy, then the invitation of the Spirit and the bride is addressed to you, for that invitation reads, " Let him that is athirst come."

But lest there should be some mistake or misapprehension, lest some sinful soul should be afraid that the invitation was not for him, it is expressed in another form : " Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." In these words, the universal invitation rings out still more clearly ; for who is there who is not willing to be saved ? Who is there who is not willing to have his sins pardoned, to enter heaven, and to enjoy its happiness for ever ? Men may differ from each other in many respects, but they are alike in this : they are all willing to be happy. We may even go a step farther than this ; all men hope to be happy. Even the most sinful and miserable cherish the hope that at some time and in some way, they may enter upon unalloyed happiness. Since this is so, how could the universal gospel invitation be better expressed than it is in the words under consideration ? Can we conceive of any possible language which would convey a fuller and freer invitation than the language before us ? " Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

II. The most prominent point in the subject of lecture is, **THE PERSONS BY WHOM THE INVITATION IS EXTENDED.** " The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." In the first place, this invitation is extended by " the Spirit." Who is the Spirit ? This is a question which every child in the church is able to answer. The Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son. The invitation, then, is from one who has authority, dignity and glory. But you may say, the Spirit has never spoken to me ; I have never heard the voice of the Spirit. Surely sin must have blinded your eyes, and stopped your ears, and hardened your hearts. Have you never heard the invitation of the Spirit ? Let us explain some of the ways in which the Spirit's invitations are extended, for as the Spirit is God, he has infinite resources at his command. He does not extend his invitations in his own glorious person, or through his own omnipotent voice, for no man could endure that presence or that voice. He extends his invitations through various instrumentalities. One reason why we have been so reluctant to accept his invitations is because we have not recognized his person and his voice in the instrumentalities he has employed. One way in which the Spirit extends his invitations is through an awakened conscience. There are times in our lives when our conscience, without any assignable cause, awakens out of a long slumber. It tells us that we have not done that

which is right, that we have been living in a way that is a disgrace and a shame, and that there is a better way. Who has not felt the power of conscience? Our conscience may now be seared as with a hot iron; but it was not always so. The time was, when it made itself heard, and we trembled beneath its reproaches. Even yet there are hours when this inward monitor asserts something of its former power. It stings us with the memory of lost opportunities, it reproaches us for our sinfulness, it tells us what we must expect in the future. That man is to be pitied who carries in his soul such a reprover, who may awaken any day or night, and who does often awaken. In the reproofs of conscience which we have heard, we must recognize the invitations of the Spirit.

Another way in which the Spirit extends his invitations is through the providences of God. When we have heard of the death of an acquaintance, something has forced the question upon our attention, why was he taken, and why are we left? When we have stood beside the grave of a friend, we could not keep back the thought, if this had been our grave, what would have been our condition? When the hand of sickness was laid upon us, and we have felt the possibility of death's approach, how we shuddered in view of eternity? In such circumstances, the thought comes to us "o'er and o'er," we ought to accept Christ. In these providences which we have experienced, we should recognize the invitations of the Spirit.

Another way in which the Spirit extends his invitations is through the word, read and preached. Sometimes, when we have been listening to a sermon, or when some passage of Scripture has been brought to our recollection, a rich and precious promise obtains a lodgment in our minds, and we would give a right hand if we could only claim that promise as ours; or some terrible threatening forces itself upon our attention, and we would give a right eye if we could be sure that it would not be fulfilled in our experience. In these promises and threatenings of the word, whose power we have all felt, we should recognize the invitations of the Spirit.

Another way in which the Spirit extends his invitations is by what are called his common operations. He makes us sad and pensive when all around us is calculated to give us joy. He makes us feel that the world is an unsatisfying portion, and that there is something necessary to happiness which we do not now possess. He makes us think of sin, and death, and judgment, and eternity, and we cannot, with all the mental strength we can command, drive these thoughts away. He makes us think of the love of God, and the death of Christ, and the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. In these thoughts, which we have all pondered, we should recognize the invitations of the Spirit.

In some or in all of these ways, the Spirit invites. In some or in all of these ways, the Spirit has invited you. You cannot recall the number

of times conscience has reproved you, the providences of God have warned you, the word of God has spoken to you, and the common operations of the Spirit have moved you. Say not, then, you have never heard the invitations of the Spirit. Why should these invitations be unheeded? What has the Spirit done that he should be thus treated? Think of the dignity of the Spirit. He is God, infinite, eternal, unchangeable. Think also of the many times he has extended his invitations. He has spoken to us in childhood, and in manhood; he has followed some of us to old age and gray hairs; and during all this time, there has not been a day, hardly an hour, in which he has not made his still small voice to be heard. To-day the Spirit calls. God grant that his invitation may not be treated with indifference until his strivings are quenched.

In the second place, the invitation is extended by the bride. "The bride says, Come." Every one who is acquainted with the Scriptures must know who is meant by the bride. The bride is the church. Of the church on earth God has said, "I have espoused you to myself." The church in heaven is described as "the bride, the Lamb's wife."

The earthly church comes, bringing the invitations of the gospel. Its ordinances invite men to be reconciled to God. This is especially the case with the ordinance of the word. Whenever and wherever the word is preached, the church through that preaching extends the invitations of the gospel; for this is the great office of preaching. Every sermon which does not in some way exhibit Christ, and reveal the truth for the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints, does not deserve the name of a gospel sermon. And though it must be admitted that ministers, forgetting at times their great duty and their high commission, preach themselves rather than Christ Jesus the Lord, yet the most of the sermons we have heard were such as declared the great truths of redemption. These invitations you have heard. Let memory exercise itself a little in a review of the past. Tell, if you can, how often you have sat in the house of God, how often you have heard these words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; how often, beneath the preaching of the word, you have been moved to give yourselves to Christ; at all these times, the church has been inviting you by the ordinance of the word. And so it is in all the ordinances. In the ordinance of prayer, the church brings the case of the unconverted to the throne of grace, and thus invites them. In the ordinance of praise, it exhibits the love and mercy of God, and thus invites. In the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, it shows the work of Christ by expressive symbols, and thus invites. The officers of the church stand ready to receive all who come in humble faith. Every man who has ever listened to the prayers and praises of the church, or who has ever witnessed the celebration of the sacraments, has been invited. Gathering up in one sentence all the earnest desires of the ransomed of the earthly church, of all the

ministers of the gospel who have besought you to be reconciled to God, of all the members of the church who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, of all those who have prayed for your conversion, of all those who praise the Lord for his mercy, of all those who have been washed in the water of baptism, of all those who have taken of the broken body and shed blood of the Saviour, gathering up in one sentence the earnest desires of all the ransomed of the earthly church, we would say, "Take the water of life freely."

But by the bride, as this term is used in the Apocalypse, is meant especially the church in heaven. When the text says, "The bride says, Come," it teaches us that the redeemed in glory, who have felt the sorrows of earth, and are now enjoying the pleasures of heaven, who have fought the battle, and are now wearing the crown of victory, who have tried the plan of salvation, and are now reaping their eternal reward, invite us to enjoy the same pleasures, to wear the same crowns, and to reap the same harvest. Paul assures us that the faithful dead are interested spectators of the Christian race; "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." If this is true, and no one can doubt it, for an inspired apostle has spoken it, what a beautiful and touching picture does it give us of the heavenly sympathy! And if the heavenly congregation is interested in the progress of Christianity on earth, it is neither unreasonable nor unscriptural to suppose, that if any dear friends have gone up from our sides to join the ransomed throng, they will be specially interested in us. If it were possible, they would willingly come back to earth to tell us of our danger. Like the man in the parable, they would gladly visit their earthly home and preach the gospel there, that their brethren might not go to the place of torment. That sainted mother, whose prayers and anxieties on your account you remember so well, and who long ago entered the many-mansioned house of God, cries back across the separating abyss, O my son, my daughter, drink of the water of life! That wife, whose dying hours were disturbed by your unbelief, pleads as of old, O my husband, drink of the water of life! That sister, whose beauty was too fair for earth, and who was transplanted into the celestial Eden, beseeches as of yore, O my brother, drink of the water of life! That child, who was torn from your arms in spite of your agonizing prayer, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," cries back from the other side of the river of death, Father, mother, drink of the water of life, that our broken family may be reunited!

Such invitations as these, who can refuse? The church on earth, with its ministers and ordinances, says, "Come." The church in heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, with all the dear ones who have

left our homes for their thrones in glory, says, "Take the water of life freely."

In the third place, the invitation is extended by him that heareth. "Let him that heareth say, Come." It is well known that the word "hear" is often used in the Scriptures in the sense of "obey." This is its meaning in the present instance. Let him that obeys say, "Come." That is, let every man first drink of the water of life for himself, and then let him invite others. This is the natural order. No man can effectively invite others to accept Christ till he himself has accepted Christ, and found in his own experience that Christ is what he professes to be. This is the scriptural order. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The meaning, then, of the words before us, is this: let every Christian say, "Come." Who has not received an invitation from this source? Has not some Christian friend spoken to you plainly of your duty? Have you not, times without number, by some hint which you could not misunderstand, and which it was not intended you should misunderstand, been invited to give yourself to Christ? Have you not, by the example of faithful Christians, often had the claims of Christianity forced upon your attention till you longed to be as they were, and to feel the joy they felt? For all true Christians are alike in this; they all desire your salvation. We, therefore, express the desire of all the people of God, when we say, "Come."

These are the persons by whom the invitation is extended: the Spirit, the church on earth, the church in heaven, and individual Christians. They extend this invitation to you. Men and brethren, what say you? The time presses. God grant that these words of gracious invitation may ring in your ears till you are forced to say, "Lo, we come; to do thy will we take delight."

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## LECTURE LXXIX.

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### THE PERFECT BOOK.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.—REV. 22: 18, 19.

As this book approaches its conclusion, the solemnity of its utterances increases. The words which are the subject of the present lecture must

fill the heart of every reader with awe. They are like the sword of the angel which guarded the tree of life on every side. They prevent every careless approach. They forbid every unholy touch. They crush out all idle curiosity. They hinder all additions or subtractions, by which the revelation of God might be made to harmonize with any human theory. They pronounce a fearful woe upon any who dare to trifle with these inspired prophecies. They startle us by their terrible solemnity, and they might prevent every attempt at exposition, if it was not for these words with which the Apocalypse begins: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those sayings which are written therein."

We may reach a profitable understanding of the words before us, if we consider the following points: the person who gives this solemn testimony, and the persons to whom it is given; the book of prophecy concerning which this testimony is given; the sin against which this testimony is borne; and the woe which is pronounced upon those who are guilty of this sin.

I. In accordance with this plan we are to notice, in the first place, **THE PERSON WHO GIVES THIS TESTIMONY, AND THE PERSONS TO WHOM IT IS GIVEN.** "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book." "I testify." Who is this that is concealed beneath the word "I"? It might be the apostle himself, for he could bear such testimony. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, he could know the fate of those who would dare to add to, or take from, the words of God. But a greater than John is here. The angel, who has taken such a prominent part in pointing out and explaining the visions of this book, could have borne this testimony, for he could not be ignorant of the truth which is here affirmed. But a greater than the angel is here. In verse 20, it is said, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." And he, whose speedy coming is so often spoken of in this book, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore it is the Lord Jesus Christ whose words we are now studying. This is a fact which we do well to bear in mind. The words of the apostle deserve serious consideration; the words of the angel deserve serious consideration; but the words of Jesus must have greater weight, and must produce a more powerful impression. He is omniscient, and he cannot be deceived as to those who trifle with the prophecies of this book. He is omnipotent, and he cannot be hindered in inflicting the punishments he has threatened. It becomes us, then, to heed the words of this warning, for it is the King of kings and the Lord of lords who says, "I testify."

To whom does the Lord Jesus give this testimony? "To every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book." This warning is

not addressed alone to the ministers of the gospel, or to those who bring great learning to bear upon the study of the Scriptures. They are included in the warning; and it is their duty to touch the inspired words of this book with reverent hands. The warning is addressed to every one who heareth these words. All those who hear these words read in the churches, and all those who read these words for themselves in their homes, should hear and heed this testimony of the Lord Jesus. It is implied that all hearers of the gospel have faculties which will enable them to understand it; that no one should receive as true the words of any teacher, simply because he is a teacher; that every man must examine for himself whether these things are so; and that every man, and not preachers and teachers alone, is responsible for the right use of these visions of the seer of Patmos. Of course those who have never heard or read these words are not under this curse, even if they should add to them or take from them; but we cannot escape from responsibility through this door of ignorance. We have read the Apocalypse in our homes till we are familiar with its words and its imagery. We have listened to its reading in the church till our hearts have been stirred within us. We cannot, therefore, get beyond the reach of this warning, for the Lord Jesus testifies unto every one "that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book."

II. We must get a clear idea of THE BOOK CONCERNING WHICH THIS TESTIMONY IS GIVEN. In verse 18, it is said, "if any man shall add unto *these things*." In verse 19, it is said, "if any man shall take away from *the words of the book of this prophecy*." What things are here referred to? What book of prophecy is here referred to? The reference is without question to the book of the Apocalypse, which is divided into four parts. In the first place, there is an introduction; in the second place, there is a description of the church as it existed in the days of John; in the third place, and this is the longest and most important division, there is a history of the church from the days of John until the coming of the final glory; in the fourth place, there is the conclusion, in which the subject of the present lecture is to be found. Inasmuch as the largest portion of this book has reference to events which were future at the time it was written, it is in this and in other places called a prophecy. This is the book of prophecy concerning which the Lord Jesus testifies to you, and to me, that nothing is to be added to it, and nothing is to be taken from it. It is complete in itself. Like every other gift of our God, it is perfect. But though these words have special reference to the book of the Apocalypse, they reveal a principle which is true of the whole Bible. When John wrote them, they could not have been applied to the whole word of inspiration, for the Bible was not then collected into one volume; it existed only in parts. And though, in our Bibles, this book forms a fitting conclusion,

it was not the last written book of inspiration. Several of the books of the New Testament were penned after John's exile in Patmos was ended. Therefore, the words under consideration did not originally refer to the entire volume of revelation; still, as has been said, they reveal a principle which is true of the entire volume of revelation. As this book is complete in itself, so the Bible is complete in itself. As this book is perfect in itself, so the Bible is perfect in itself. As nothing is to be added to or taken from this book, so nothing is to be added to or taken from the Bible. Nevertheless, let us not forget that this testimony of the Lord Jesus has direct reference only to the Apocalypse.

III. We were to notice THE SINS AGAINST WHICH THIS TESTIMONY WAS BORNE. They are two in number. The first one is described in these words: "If any man shall add unto these things"; that is, if any man shall claim that these revelations are incomplete, and shall add to them out of his own wisdom to make them complete; or, if he shall profess to have a new revelation to supplement the visions which John was permitted to see. In either case, he adds to the things which are written in this book, and is guilty of sin, for he puts his own wisdom or his own visions upon the same level with the inspired revelations of this book. Such adding to the things written in this book is manifestly different from true and devout exposition. The latter is only an explanation of the visions, and an enforcement of their lessons; the former is putting into the word of God something which God did not put there. The one is a Christian duty; the other is an aggravated sin. If a man should come to us and say, I have an additional vision, one which throws additional light upon the overthrow of Antichrist and upon the exact time when the throne of judgment will be set, we would feel under no obligation to consider his vision; he is attempting to do that which is here forbidden; and we would have the right to reject the vision without examination, for by it he is adding to the things which are written in this book. But if one should come to us saying, I think your exposition of the seals, or of the trumpets, or of the vials, is incorrect; you have overlooked certain symbols which are of importance, you have mistaken the meaning of other symbols, you have neglected the light which other passages of Scripture throw upon the visions; we would feel that he is doing nothing more than he has a right to do; we would be bound to examine his theory, for he is not adding to the things which are written in this book; he is only trying, as God gives him opportunity, to understand and explain the things which are written in this book.

Adding to the things which are written in this book is manifestly a sin. It is attributing imperfections to God; it is saying that when he gave a revelation to man, he was too ignorant or too weak to make a sufficient revelation; it is putting ourselves in the place of God and claiming to do



that which is exclusively the work of God ; it is claiming to be wiser than God. It should require no argument to convince us that this is most aggravated blasphemy. Is it necessary to say, that the warning of the text is needed in the days in which we live ? That the sin which is here referred to is one which is often met with ? Men assert that the word of God is not a sufficient rule of life. They add to it the teachings of science, the inductions of reason, and the manifestations and revelations which they profess to receive from the spirit-world. All such may well tremble in view of the woe which is here pronounced.

The second part of the twofold sin is described in the words, "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy." They are guilty of this sin, who reject this book altogether, or who reject any part of it. It would seem, from the words before us, that the Spirit of inspiration saw that there would be danger of this. And there is danger. This book describes with great plainness the rise and progress and destruction of certain false systems of religion ; and when these descriptions were being fulfilled, those who adhered to these systems would be disposed to correct or strike out these descriptions. This book contains the history of the final triumph of the church ; and the enemies of the church would be disposed to change or reject that history. Therefore, the Spirit of inspiration utters the solemn warning of the text.

This taking away from the words of this book is manifestly a sin. Like the sin of adding to these words, it is putting ourselves in the place of God, and claiming to be wiser than God. And there is need of this warning, for the sin here described is often met with. When men find that the word of God condemns their lives or overthrows their theories, they think little of rejecting its claims. It is too often the case that when science, or reason, or prejudice seem to come in conflict with the Bible, the former stand, while the latter is rejected.

IV. We were to notice **THE FEARFUL WOE** which is pronounced upon those who are guilty of these sins. Of those who are guilty of the first sin, viz., the sin of adding unto these things, it is said, "God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book." In the Apocalypse, many of the punishments which God inflicts upon his enemies are described. These punishments are fearful. Fire, hail, and earthquake, famine, pestilence, and sword, the agony, darkness and sorrow of the bottomless pit, are all employed as ministers of divine wrath. These punishments are, in the words before us, called plagues. The meaning, then, is simply this : those who add unto the things written in this book are regarded as the enemies of God and his church, and they will have a part in the fearful doom of such enemies. Look at some of the revelations of this doom. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men,

and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand" ? " To them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months ; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. And in those days, shall men seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." " And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb ; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever : and they have no rest day nor night." " And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea ; and it became as the blood of a dead man ; and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood." " There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image." " And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent ; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." " And I saw an angel standing in the sun ; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth ; and the fowls were filled with their flesh."

These are some of the plagues which God will add unto him who adds to the things which are written in this book, for he is an enemy of God, and he must share the doom of those who are enemies.

Of those who are guilty of the second sin, viz., of taking away from

the words of the book of this prophecy, it is said, "God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." The book of life has been explained more than once in our previous lectures. The heavenly state of the glorified saints is represented as a kingdom. The names of all the citizens of this kingdom are enrolled. This book of enrollment is called the book of life. None but those whose names are written in this book can inherit the blessedness of this kingdom. The meaning, then, of this part of the woe is simply this: those who dare to take away from the words of this book will have no place in heaven. Their names will not be written in the Lamb's book of life.

And the holy city has been fully described. In our lectures on the previous chapters we saw the New Jerusalem, whose builder and maker was God; we saw its gates of pearl, and its streets of gold, and its foundations of precious stones; we saw who were its sorrowless inhabitants, and who were left without. The meaning, then, of this part of the woe is simply this: those who dare to take away from the words of this book will never enter through those gates into the city; they will have their part among the dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and those who are without.

"The things which are written in this book," the promises which it contains, and the glories and triumphs which it describes, are yet fresh in our memories. The meaning, then, of this part of the symbol is simply this: those who dare to take away from the words of this book will never inherit the promises, and the glories, and the triumphs which are herein described.

If these things are so, with what reverence should we engage in the study of this book! No other part of the Bible is so fenced about with solemn warning. Of course, there are revelations here which are hard to understand; we are liable to mistakes in our expositions; but we may hope that our weakness and our mistakes will be forgiven. But if we trifle with the word of inspiration itself, if we add to it, or if we take from it, we may not hope for forgiveness, either in this world or in the world to come.

It has been said that these words, though they have primary reference only to the Apocalypse, reveal a principle which is true of the entire Bible. The whole Bible, like this portion of it, is a book to which nothing is to be added, and from which nothing is to be taken at any time or on any pretext. Words similar to those we have just considered are to be found in many places in the Scriptures. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you." Deuteronomy 4: 2. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." Deuteronomy 12:

32. "The law of the Lord is perfect." Psalm 19: 7. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1: 8. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Luke 16: 31. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3: 16. All these passages, and many others, which might be quoted, teach the perfection and the sufficiency of the revealed will of God, as it is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The sufficiency of the Scriptures will be seen from the following considerations: 1. They tell us all we need to know concerning eternal life and happiness. 2. They tell us what we need to do in order to reach eternal life and happiness. 3. They contain the most precious promises. 4. They contain the most startling threatenings. 5. They reveal the only Saviour. Since these things are so, we may well say with the apostle, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." We may well say with Abraham in the parable, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." For these words of our divine Master are true, not with regard to the Apocalypse alone, but also with regard to the entire Bible. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

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## LECTURE LXXX.

### THE CONCLUSION.

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.—REV. 22: 20, 21.

THE name of that portion of inspiration whose concluding words form the subject of lecture, is the Revelation. It is also called the Apocalypse, which is but a Greek word in English letters. The English name is only a translation of the Greek one; that is, the Apocalypse means the Revelation. This book is called the Apocalypse, or the Revelation, not, as is

sometimes thought, because it reveals the history of the earthly church and the future glory of the heavenly church, but because it has so much to do with the Apocalypse, the Revelation, the appearing of the Lord Jesus. On almost every page our attention is called to the second coming of the Son of man. In the introduction it is said, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." To the church in Ephesus it is said, "I will come unto thee quickly." To the church in Pergamos it is said, "I will come unto thee quickly." To the church in Thyatira it is said, "That which ye have already, hold fast till I come." To the church in Sardis it is said, "I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee." To the church of Philadelphia it is said, "Behold, I come quickly." In a similar way the second coming of Christ is set before us throughout the entire book as a comfort and an encouragement. And it is fitting that as this book approaches its conclusion, the references to the appearing of the Son of man should be more frequent and more plain. Three times, in this last chapter, the announcement rings out like a trumpet call from heaven. In verse 7 we are told, "Behold, I come quickly." In verse 12 we are told, "Behold, I come quickly." And again, in verse 20, we are told, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." The apostle, who had so often listened to this announcement, and whose heart was filled with unutterable longings for the coming of that glorious day, responds, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." And then the visions having ended, and his task being finished, he pronounces, as with extended hands over the waiting church, the usual formula of benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you .all. Amen."

Surely, then, this book is appropriately called the Revelation, the Apocalypse, the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, for this is its great theme. And surely this is an appropriate conclusion for this book, for it leaves us gazing into heaven, like the disciples on mount Olivet, and looking for the time when the Saviour shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. Let us, in our concluding lecture, attempt, with reverent hearts, to catch the meaning and imbibe the spirit of these farewell words. To do this, let us consider these three points: the Lord's proclamation; the church's response; and the apostle's benediction.

I. We are to consider THE LORD'S PROCLAMATION. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." We have called these words "the Lord's proclamation," for there can be no doubt that these are the words of the Lord. It is true, in the course of these visions, we have sometimes heard the voice of the apostle; but when he has spoken, he has spoken under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord. We have sometimes heard the voice of the great multitude of the redeemed, and some-

times the voice of one or more of the angelic host; but when they have spoken, they have spoken by the commandment of the Lord. We are, therefore, to recognize the voice of the Lord in all the visions of this book; for when he does not speak in his own glorious person, he speaks by some one whom he has commissioned to reveal his will.

The subject matter of the Lord's proclamation has reference to his second coming. "I come quickly." This second coming of Christ is not a doctrine peculiar to the Apocalypse. It is revealed in other parts of the New Testament. It is not entirely unknown in the Old Testament. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints." Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth." The Psalmist sings again and again of the coming of his Lord to judge the earth. Daniel spake of the Ancient of days, who at his coming should receive an everlasting dominion. Haggai speaks of the shaking of all the nations, until the desire of all nations should come. Zechariah tells us, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives." But it is in the New Testament that this second coming is revealed with special clearness. As Jesus drew near the time of his departure, and as he would prepare his disciples for that event which their weak faith could as yet only imperfectly understand, he kept repeating the promise, "I will come again." And no sooner had the Saviour ascended to his Father and his God, than the disciples took up the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus," a cry which is echoed and re-echoed by all the inspired writers of the New Testament, and by all the faithful Christians who have lived since the last of the apostles has entered into rest. We cannot repeat all the passages of the New Testament which refer to the second coming of Christ. A few must suffice. The Saviour says, "I will come again and receive you to myself." "The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him." "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Paul says, "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Peter says, "The day of the Lord will so come as a thief in the night." The angels said, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." But we must put a curb upon memory. Passage after passage, in which the appearing of the Lord Jesus is revealed, forces itself upon our attention. It seems almost as if this was the great burden of the New Testament. No believer in the New Testament can for a moment doubt the fact that Jesus is to come the second time.

Taking, then, for granted this second coming, which the Lord Jesus himself proclaims in the words under consideration, several questions present themselves to be answered. What will be the manner of his coming? From the passages which have been quoted, and from others which might be quoted, we learn that it is to be a glorious coming. It will not be like his first coming. Then he came as a servant; hereafter he is to come as a king. Then his coming was unknown; hereafter his coming will shine from the east to the west. Then he came alone; hereafter he will be attended with all the retinue of heaven's monarch. What wonders will accompany his coming? Dwellers on the earth will be startled and astonished. The dead will be raised. The heavens and the earth will be burned. What is the end or object of his coming? It is to complete the salvation of his saints, to overthrow his enemies, to judge the world, and to reign in and over his church for ever.

On these points, viz., the fact, the manner, the accompaniments, and the object of the Saviour's second coming, there is no material difference of opinion among those who believe the New Testament to be the word of God. So far, all are of one mind. We have, therefore, only touched upon these points, that we might consider, at a little greater length, another point on which there is a difference of opinion; and that is, the order of the Saviour's second coming. On this point, there are two main theories. All believe that the Saviour will come. All believe that there is to be a millennium. But some believe that the millennium is to come first, and that Christ is to come afterwards; others believe that Christ is to come first, and that the millennium is to come afterwards. Some believe that the millennium is to usher in the coming of Christ; others believe that the coming of Christ is to usher in the millennium, and that during the millennium he is to reign personally on the earth. We will not enter into any argument on the merits of these theories. We will state only the conclusions we have reached in the course of our previous lectures. We believe that Christ will not come till after the millennium, and that when he comes, he will not come to reign in person on the earth, but to sit on the throne of final judgment. The order of events, as we have learned them from the visions of the Apocalypse, is this: The breaking of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, and the pouring out of the vials, shadow forth various and sore conflicts between the church and its enemies. At last, in those years upon which the church is now entering, these enemies will be reduced to three, viz., popery, infidelity, and Mohammedanism, symbolized by the unclean spirits like frogs which proceeded out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These enemies will then be overthrown in the mighty conflict, which is called the battle of Armageddon. Then Satan will be bound for the period of a thousand years, a period which is measured not by a thou-

sand literal years, nor by a thousand prophetic years; a period which is similar to that which is indicated by the saying that a thousand years are with the Lord as one day. This period of a thousand figurative years is the millennium. At the close of this millennial period of the world's history, which is to be characterized by the general prevalence of peace and holiness on the earth, Satan will be loosed for a little season, and will make one final and desperate attempt to overthrow the kingdom of Christ; he will deceive the nations, and gather the hosts of Gog and Magog; but they will be destroyed with fire from heaven, and Satan himself will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. And then the long predicted event will take place; the Saviour will come in all his glory; the dead will be raised; all will be judged according to the deeds done in the body; the wicked will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels; and the righteous will enter in through the gates into the city, whose builder and maker is God.

This, as we understand it, is the order of events, as it is unfolded in the visions we have been studying. But some one may say, if this is the order of events, if the Saviour is not to come till after the millennium, how could it be said in the days of the apostle, how can it be said now, that he is to come *quickly*? Two thousand years, almost, have passed away since the solemn words of my text were uttered; and the Saviour has not yet come, and there are no signs of his speedy coming. How then could he say with truth, "I come quickly"? This question is not so difficult to answer as at first sight it might appear. The second coming of Christ is the last event in a connected series of events, which are inseparably bound together, and which must succeed each other without let or hindrance. Therefore, it might be said that Christ began to come when the first of these events took place; for this event was the first step in his coming, and each succeeding event was a step which brought his coming nearer. Christians of every generation have been looking for events, which were to them the footsteps of their approaching Lord. Hence it may be said to each generation, Christ is coming quickly; for events which prepare the way for his coming, are always at hand.

In addition to this, every man's death is, to him, virtually the coming of Christ. His destiny is then fixed. Both his body and his soul wait in a changeless state for the sounding of the archangel's trumpet which will herald the coming of the Son of man. And death may come at any moment. This is the thought which gives such solemnity to the exhortation, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Surely, then, since all the events predicted in the Apocalypse lead to the coming of Christ by a providential arrangement which cannot be broken, and since the day of every man's death is, to him, virtually the day of the coming of Christ, it is right to describe that coming, at any time, as at hand;



for some of the events which lead to it are at hand, and the event itself is at hand to every dweller on the earth.

This is the coming which the Lord himself announces. It is the great event which yet remains in the world's history, which we will all witness, in which we all will have an interest, and which will mark the end of the long conflict and the beginning of the eternal victory. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

II. And what is THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE to this announcement? It is, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." In these words, the apostle speaks for you and me, and for all the followers of the Lord Jesus in all the centuries of time; for, as has been said, no sooner had the Lord departed from the summit of Olivet, than the disciples took up the cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"; and ever since, this cry has been echoing through the corridors of time, and it must grow in intensity and in volume, until the stately stepplings of the coming Lord are seen, and it is changed into the more rapturous cry, "the Lord has come."

What is the meaning of this response? It implies resignation to the will of God. It means, "Come when thou wilt and as thou wilt." In this, as in everything else, the children of God are ready to say with their blessed Master, "Not my will, but thine be done." It implies preparation for the coming of Christ; for he, who through divine grace is not ready to meet his Saviour and Judge, cannot force his lips to utter, or his heart to feel the words, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It implies longing for the coming of Christ. He only who is weary of the conflicts of life, sick of the sin which abounds in the world, discouraged by the remnants of indwelling corruption, and hungry for the peace and holiness of heaven, can utter the prayer of the longing church. For it is a prayer. It is synonymous with that other petition, which Jesus taught his disciples: "Thy kingdom come"; in which we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, that we and others may be brought into it and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened. When we utter the response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," we pray that the unclean spirits which proceeded from the mouth of the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet may be destroyed, that the battle of Armageddon may be fought, and infidelity, popery and Mohammedanism may be defeated, that the millennium may come, that the judgment and the scenes of glory which are beyond may be hastened.

Are you prepared to take up this response? to utter this prayer? You cannot be, if you are not reconciled to God by the death of his Son. These words, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," are the shibboleth of the true church. None but the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty can speak them aright. It may be that some of us, who are the sons and daughters

of the Lord Almighty, hesitate and stammer when we attempt to say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"; but if so, it is because our faith is too weak and our love too human. Let our faith rise to assurance, let our love burn and glow as the love of the redeemed should burn and glow, let us recognize in the coming Judge our elder brother who died for us, let us see in the New Jerusalem our heavenly home; then can we say, with the unmistakable emphasis of longing souls, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

In view of the fact that the day of our death is to us the day of Christ's coming, we ought to be able to say with reference to death, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." There is a command which has come down to us through the centuries and which has startled many into obedience—even the command, "Prepare to meet thy God." Are you prepared? Preparation is needed. Then for the first time will we see God face to face. Then will we be on our final trial. It will then be decided for us, either for an endless life or for an endless death. Is no preparation needed for that interview, that trial, that decision? You know what the preparation is. It is described in the gospel; it is exemplified in the lives of the saints; it is summed up in the words, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." You know that this preparation should be made at once. We carry about in our bodies the seeds of dissolution, and these seeds may ripen at any hour of any day or night. Are you ready to step out into the darkness and to meet your coming Lord? I can see death-bed scenes in the not far distant future. On those death-beds you and I are lying, just as those did who have gone before, and whose departure we witnessed. Those dear to us are standing around, trying in vain to conceal the agony they feel. The eyes are growing dim with the gathering mists of death's dark valley. The heart throbs, and waits, and throbs again. The awful silence of that chamber which lies so near the spirit-land is almost too great for human strength to endure. Then he which testifieth these things will say to us, "Surely I come quickly." Blessed will we be if, with paling lips and expiring breath, we can whisper in fullest faith and confidence, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

III. ON THE APOSTLE'S BENEDICTION we need not dwell. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." It is a benediction similar to the concluding benedictions of the other books of the New Testament. The full form of this apostolic benediction, of which there are many variations, is to be found in 2 Cor. 13: 14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

What is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the apostle prays to be with us all? It includes all that Christ has done for us, and all that he is yet to do. "Ye know," says Paul, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through

his poverty might be rich." We need this grace for our pardon, our justification, our sanctification, and our adoption; we need it in our ordinances and our privileges; we need it in our conflicts, and our trials, and at our death. We all need this grace. We need it as ministers and people; we need it as parents and children, as husbands and wives, and in all the relations of life. We need it at all times. We need it in youth, in middle life, and in old age. They needed it who lived while the seals were being broken, and while the trumpets were being sounded; we need it who live while the vials are being poured out; they will need it who live in the peaceful days of the millennium. Therefore, let us rejoice that the hands of the beloved apostle have been stretched out over us, and over all them that love the Lord through all the ages, while he says in benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

With this word, "amen," with which the seer concludes his revelation, and which, like the word "farewell," is one of those sad and solemn words of human speech which we hesitate to speak, our exposition of the Apocalypse comes to an end. Have we reached a clearer understanding of these things than we ever had before? Have we received anything of the blessedness promised to him that heareth the words of this prophecy, and keepeth the things which are written in this book? Have our hearts been inspired with greater courage for the irresistible conflicts which must take place between Christianity and its foes? Have our hearts been established more and more in the faith of the gospel? Have there been awakened in our souls greater longings, so that we can say as never before in the past,

"O Jerusalem, my happy home,  
When shall I come to thee?  
When shall my sorrows have an end,  
In joy, in peace, in thee?"

Have we been led to say more earnestly, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? If so, not unto us, not unto us, but unto his name be the glory.

In the hope that we, who have meditated together on the joys of the New Jerusalem, may together enjoy its full blessedness in the world to come, we must write the word which is so often spoken in Christian assemblies that its meaning is well nigh forgotten, the word which marks the conclusion of my labors on this portion of the word of God, the word,

A M E N .





